

TRAVELLER

DEEP NIGHT REVELATION
EXPEDITIONS



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

DEEP NIGHT REVELATION EXPEDITIONS

CREDITS

CLASSIC TRAVELLER

Marc Miller

Loren Wiseman, John Harshman, Frank Chadwick, Darryl Hany, Winston Hamilton, Tony Svajlenka, Scott Renner, Doug Pöe, David MacDonald, Wayne Roth, Paul R. Banner, Jennell Jaquays.

MONGOOSE TRAVELLER

Author

Martin J. Dougherty

Editor

Matthew Sprange

Layout and Graphic Design

Sandrine Thirache

Cover Illustration

Quentin Soubrouillard

Interior Illustrations

Sandrine Thirache, Maia Anderson, Cassie Gregory, Quentin Soubrouillard, Ghislain Pariset, Andoni Fernandez, Diego Domínguez

TRAVELLER INNER CIRCLE

Andrew James Alan Welty, Colin Dunn, M. J. Dougherty, Rob Eaglestone, Sam Wissa, Joshua Bell, Maksim Smelchak

Special Thanks

Marc Miller, Loren Wiseman

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T R A V E L L E R INTRODUCTION

Expeditions is the sixth expansion book for *Deepnight Revelation*, containing additional adventures and encounters for use throughout the campaign. Some adventures are linked to specific regions of space; others can be slotted in anywhere. Similarly, the sentient races described here can be used wherever the Referee needs them. An encounter with these people may take place unexpectedly or the Travellers might discover traces of their presence and seek them out.

A number of ready-made star systems are also presented. Again, these can be used wherever the Referee has a need. Each has a point of interest associated with it but these do not have to be used. These 'standard' star systems can be re-used – perhaps with some slight adjustments – whenever the Travellers encounter a similar system, thus saving the Referee preparation time.

Some of the phenomena described in this book tend towards the more outlandish end of the science-fiction spectrum. An encounter with something truly weird will remind the Travellers that they are abroad in a vast universe and that their knowledge is extremely limited. Such events should be used sparingly. If the campaign

descends into 'weirdness of the week' it becomes difficult for the Travellers to determine what is normal and what is not, so the impact of strange events will be lost.

The phenomena are all based upon concepts previously presented in or assumed by *Traveller* books. Jumpspace anomalies have featured in several publications; all those presented here are extrapolated from these sources. Physical phenomena assume that there is much we do not know about our universe and that some things considered impossible might, in fact, not be. It may be necessary to play fast and loose with currently known laws of the universe but the assumption is that these effects are caused by highly unusual circumstances or conditions and constitute 'special cases' in the laws of physics rather than defying them.

There is more to the adventures than a quick gaming session. For example, *Hillforts of Entrata* deals with a first contact situation that could be a template for other encounters. The adventure demonstrates the difficulties and pitfalls the Travellers might encounter when dealing with primitive people, along with mechanics for resolving attempts to interact with them.



POINTS OF INTEREST

The following information can be used in a variety of ways. Each system is presented in the standard format used throughout the *Deepnight Revelation* campaign, with a point of interest or possible adventure associated with each. Worlds and systems can be re-used as the setting for a different adventure or can fill the gap when the Travellers suddenly want detailed information on an area the Referee has not prepared. Most of these systems are close to the norms, other than their point of interest, and can be used as a starting point to quickly create other star systems of a similar type. Minor details can be altered if the system is re-used, such as adding a couple of rockball worlds or replacing a gas giant with a planetoid belt.

A YOUNG PLANET

Solo Star, Habitable World

This system orbits a K5 (orange) main sequence star and is of average density and composition. The system has three gas giants, two rockballs and a planetoid belt, in addition to a habitable planet. This is quite a young world, with a primitive ecosystem.

PRIMARY (K5 Star)

Primary 1	(X000000-0)
Primary 2	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 3	(X766000-0)
Primary 4	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 5	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 6	(X300000-0)
Primary 7	(X200000-0)

Point of Interest

The point of interest in this system is its young, life-bearing planet. The continents are home to wide expanses of grasses, ferns and fungi but animal life is limited to simple organisms living close to watercourses or marshy areas. Life is more evolved in the seas, with jellyfish-like creatures occupying most ecological niches. Some of these are truly huge, with a 'bag' spanning several kilometres. These creatures are generally peaceable, simply drifting through the oceans filtering smaller organisms out of the water. They can be a problem for Travellers exploring the waters, as they will entangle any vessel or craft they encounter, either in their main body or among their thousands of thin tentacles.

The mission's planetary and life scientists will be interested in the development of this ecosystem and where it might eventually go. There are no vertebrates or chordata (primitive creatures with a nerve-bearing 'rod' that might eventually develop into a spine) on this world and no signs they are ever likely to appear. Most creatures have soft bodies; even crustaceans are rare. The most advanced life on land resembles small slugs with a gill/lung breathing apparatus suited to life on the fringes of watercourses. There are no significant threats to the Travellers on land but of course the crew may well get themselves into trouble anyway.

SOMEONE

LIVED HERE?

Binary, Close Companion

This system has two stars; a K7 (orange) main sequence star and its M2 (red) close companion. The four significant bodies all orbit the barycentre of the stellar pair, with complex orbits exposing them to significant changes in the amount of stellar energy received. The outer terrestrial planet has a particularly eccentric orbit but is otherwise unremarkable, as is the gas giant. The inner two are possible candidates for habitable worlds and indeed the innermost has a well-developed ecosystem. The second planet is a water world with an unbreathable atmosphere. There is life in the oceans but it is highly primitive and not useful as food.

PRIMARY (K7 Star)

COMPANION (M2 Star)

Primary 1	(X965000-0)
Primary 2	(X5AA000-0)
Primary 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 4	(X510000-0)

Points of Interest

The innermost planet has a breathable atmosphere and enough surface water to support abundant life. This is of a very hardy sort, as the interaction of the two suns causes a harsh climate cycle. The planet orbits at would normally be the outer edge of the warm zone and is generally on the cold side but for a period equivalent to three months in every two years the average temperature is uncomfortably high. This in turn creates a dry period



in which enormous forest and grass fires are common, followed by a few weeks of storms, which facilitate the rampant regrowth of burned areas. The temperature then drops steadily, with most plant species going into a state of semi-hibernation during the coldest months. Animal life tends to dwell in the oceans or deep forests where there is shelter from the tough conditions, with many species hibernating or undertaking long migrations.

A survey will indicate ruins in one of the more sheltered areas of the planet. They are old, several thousand years at least, and there is nothing left above ground. A grid pattern of streets and buildings can be made out by observing changes in the vegetation and taking density readings. The materials used seem to be typical of mid-tech (TL5) societies but the street layout is more reminiscent of a higher-tech civilisation with access to at least some grav vehicles. The size of the settlement suggests a small city of perhaps 20–30,000 people and since there is no evidence of habitation anywhere else on the planet this is likely to be a colony. The location is high on the list of possible sites the *Deepnight Revelation* exploration crew would recommend to a follow-up mission.

This was indeed a colony, set up by some long-vanished civilisation. Whether they reached this world by faster-than-light travel or used a slower-than-light sleeper or

generation ship is an open question; there are no signs of the ship or its subordinate craft in the system. The Referee could use this encounter to provide hints about a race that might be met a little later or it might be just another mystery encountered in the course of the expedition. After all, the path of *Deepnight Revelation* resembles a series of intermittent stitches across a very broad canvas. The chance of a stitch coinciding with a tiny bubble of once-inhabited space is not all that great. This may prompt the Travellers to wonder what else they have flown right past.

LOOKING FOR LIFE

Solo Star, No Habitable World

This system orbits a G7 (yellow) main sequence star. The inner system is characterised by uninhabitable terrestrial planets, the outer by gas giants. Most terrestrial bodies in the system are rockballs but one has an inert nitrogen-carbon dioxide atmosphere. Primary 6 might have developed life – of a sort – but is too far from the star. Even with the greenhouse effect of its dense atmosphere all water on the planet is frozen. Two of the terrestrials have corrosive atmospheres. These are opposite sides of the same coin; Primary 4 has a trace atmosphere composed of corrosive gases, whilst Primary 8 has a thick envelope of dense acidic gas.

PRIMARY (G7 Star)

Primary 1	(X400000-O)
Primary 2	(X000000-O)
Primary 3	(X310000-O)
Primary 4	(X3B0000-O)
Primary 5	(X410000-O)
Primary 6	(X9A1000-O)
Primary 7	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 8	(XAB2000-O)
Primary 9	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 10	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 11	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 12	(X100000-O)

Points of Interest

Primary 6 might attract interest as a possible life-bearing world but closer examination reveals it is entirely covered in ice. Even deep water is frozen solid and with little volcanic activity there are no thermal vents to create a localised warm area where life could develop. There is life in the system, however. The rather nasty environment on Primary 8 has seen the development of a number of species, all very alien to oxygen-breathers. The largest of these is an armoured crustacean about one metre long, which breeds in acid pools but hunts on the surface. Its prey are mostly smaller crustaceans that feed on the mosses and similar primitive plants found all across the planetary surface. The mission's life scientists are likely to be fascinated by this very alien ecosystem, whilst physical scientists may be able to extract unusual compounds from the environment.

DISTANT SUPER-EARTH

Binary, Distant Companion

This system orbits a K2 (orange) main sequence star, with an M4 (red) distant companion. The primary system contains only one terrestrial planet, which has an inert and unbreathable atmosphere. In addition to a planetoid belt there are eight gas giants, most with extensive moon systems. The innermost gas giant shows signs of gravitational perturbation, with a steeply inclined orbit. The secondary star has only one body in orbit, a particularly large super-earth.

PRIMARY (K2 Star)

Primary 1	(Small Gas Giant) inclined orbit
Primary 2	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 4	(X000000-O)
Primary 5	(X5A2000-O)
Primary 6	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 7	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 8	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 9	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 10	(Small Gas Giant)

SECONDARY (M4 Star)

Secondary 1	(Super-Earth)
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Points of Interest

The presence of so many gas giants in a system will pique the interest of the space scientists but the real puzzle is the distant super-earth. This is a particularly huge planet, which a diameter of just over 21,500 kilometres. Surface gravity is 2.1g, making operating planetside hard work but entirely possible. The world has an extremely dense oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere. Pressure protection is required at sea level but some very high altitudes have a shirtsleeve environment.

The world's extensive vegetation is typically lightweight and low, with few tree-like structures and animals are likewise adapted to the high-pressure, high-gravity environment. Most have inefficient or very small breathing apparatus and cannot survive in an environment suitable for humans. Species tend to have multiple legs, either in the form of a centipede or a pseudo-arachnid. Bodies are lightweight, low-density and often fragile. Lower altitudes are characterised by thick mist, making exploration a difficult process.

HOTHOUSE WORLD

Very Sparse System

Orbiting an M2 (red) main sequence star in this system is a planetoid belt and single terrestrial planet. This is rather too close to the star for comfort and even with the protection of a strong magnetic field and a dense atmosphere the world is a stormy, steamy hellhole where humans need cooling equipment and a mask designed to filter oxygen out of the hot soup of an atmosphere.

PRIMARY (M2 Star)

Primary 1	(X696000-O)
Primary 2	(X000000-O)

Points of Interest

The world is largely covered in thick jungle where edible and perhaps exotic organic materials might be harvested but working conditions are hazardous at best. The high temperatures will quickly run down batteries in a vacc suit or cooling-suit and someone caught outside of a vehicle or shelter with no protection is likely to collapse from heat exhaustion in a matter of minutes.

Deep in the jungles of this 'hothouse planet' is a magnetic anomaly. Scanning from above reveals little other than the presence of a high concentration of ferrous metals spread over a radius of several kilometres. Ground-penetrating sensors will indicate no discernible pattern to the metal deposits but there is a pattern of shallow cratering that suggests multiple impacts.

Investigating at ground level requires digs at multiple points; not an easy task at all. If the Travellers go to the trouble they will unearth fragments of iron and nickel likely to have come from an asteroid. However, the cratering does not match the projected mass of the asteroid. Something this big should have done a lot more damage, perhaps on a level of Terra's dinosaur-killer. Instead this one seems to have come in relatively slowly. Local damage would have been enormous but the world's ecosystem survived. There is no obvious explanation for this.

The Referee can use this minor anomaly in various ways. Perhaps it is entirely natural; an iron-nickel asteroid came in at an oblique angle, broke up and scrubbed off enough velocity to cause only localised devastation. Perhaps this was an experiment on the part of a starfaring race or perhaps someone dropped a rock from orbit 'gently' to take out some local threat.

HOT WATER

Sparse System

This system centres upon a typical G5 (yellow) main sequence star. In addition to a planetoid belt and a small gas giant there is an 'iceball' world in a very distant orbit. The innermost planet is likely to be of the most interest, however. It is a dense-atmosphere water world with a high surface temperature. It has no moons but thermal activity in the endless oceans creates a turbulent and complex cycle of currents and surges. What life exists on this planet is concentrated in the more stable areas of the seabed, although there have been several iterations of evolution and extinction in other areas. These energetic regions have seen life emerge anew several times and might be of great interest to scientists studying the conditions necessary for the beginnings of life processes.

PRIMARY (G5 Star)

Primary 1	(X89A000-0)
Primary 2	(X000000-0)
Primary 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 4	(X521000-0)

Points of Interest

The physical processes going on in the oceans of this world are interesting in their own right but it is the way they interact with biological processes that will fascinate the expedition's scientists. The combination of factors in some areas of the planet have repeatedly created an opportunity for amino acids to form proteins and for life to evolve. Most of these flourishings are short-lived, just a few million years at most. After this,

changing conditions will usually wipe out the simple life forms that have appeared. Seabed sediment thus contains evidence of repeated 'beginnings of early life' events, allowing scientists to compare the living things that emerged each time and correlate them with known conditions. Whilst this might seem mundane to starfarers headed for the edge of the spiral arm, unlocking the mysteries of how life starts is one of the great scientific endeavours and a place like this could yield a wealth of information on the subject.

MULTIPLE IMPACTS

Dense System

This system centres on an M7 (red) main sequence star. The system contains a mix of gas giants and terrestrials, with three distinct planetoid belts. The one in orbit 7 is of normal density and composition but the two inner belts are both unusually dense. Between them lies a narrow open zone, resulting in classification as two belts. The innermost is barely stable as a result of solar heating, with the occasional planetoid wandering out of the belt. This has resulted in intermittent asteroidal bombardment of the third planet throughout its life span.

The third planet is, broadly speaking, habitable. However, the process of evolution has been reset several times by major asteroid impacts. As a result the land is generally barren, with simple plant life spreading out from the shores. The oceans contain few complex animals but are home to a vast variety of plankton and similar simple creatures.

PRIMARY (M7 Star)

Primary 1	(X000000-0)
Primary 2	(X000000-0)
Primary 3	(X758000-0)
Primary 4	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 5	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 6	(X100000-0)
Primary 7	(X000000-0)
Primary 8	(X7A1000-0)
Primary 9	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 10	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 11	(X4A0000-0)
Primary 12	(X7A3000-0)
Primary 13	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 14	(Small Gas Giant)

Points of Interest

The two inner belts are dense and clumpy. Both have multiple clusters, dwarf planets and half-formed planetesimals. Gravitational interactions between these clumps and clusters keeps both belts in a state of constant flux. Two large dwarf planets at the inner side

of the second belt act as 'shepherds', maintaining a clear edge to the outer of the two belts. The inner one is more fuzzy, with density gradually increasing towards its central region. This belt is particularly hazardous due to stellar radiation and heating as well as the complex movements of the planetoids within it. It is rare for a planetoid to be completely ejected from the belt and most of those that do are captured by one of the gas giants as a moon or wander out of the system. Enough have hit the third planet to make it unviable for the evolution of life.

Cratering on the third planet implies several massive impacts and many smaller ones over the course of millions of years. There is also evidence of 'nuclear winter' type events that have triggered periods of 'snowball planet' conditions. Each has caused a mass extinction, with life slowly developing again afterwards. The expedition's life scientists will be very interested in this process and the variations that occurred each time. Indeed, this world merits a long-term study that might give new insights into how early life develops. One of the frustrations encountered by the mission's scientists is the need to grab a little data and move on quickly.

DOWN IN THE VALLEY BELOW

Complex System

This is a very complex star system, comprising three pairs of stars and a number of companions. The system's primary is a pair of near-identical O5 (blue) main sequence stars with a G3 (yellow) companion orbiting them. This creates a very hot and energetic system, which nevertheless contains two worlds of interest.

The second pair, which also has a companion star, is mismatched and has no planetary bodies. The G5 (yellow) main sequence companion has a highly eccentric retrograde orbit and is almost certainly a captured body. The pair of stars designated Tertiary A and B are almost identical K5s (orange) and have a small planetary system. The M8 (red) main sequence star designated quaternary has a single planetary body; a small water world with some oxygen in its atmosphere, suggesting primitive life may exist in its oceans. The secondary, tertiary and quaternary groups all orbit the barycentre of their own gravity and that of the primary pairing. The outermost stellar body of the system also orbits this point but in an eccentric manner steeply inclined to the system ecliptic. Its planetary system contains a super-earth which is routinely bombarded with asteroids from the orbit 3 belt.

PRIMARY A (O5 Star)

PRIMARY B (O5 Star)

Primary 1	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 2	(X30000-0)
Primary 3	(X875000-0)
Primary 4	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 5	(X000000-0)
Primary 6	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 7	(X3A0000-0)
Primary 8	(X6A1000-0)

PRIMARY COMPANION (G3 Star)

Primary Companion 1 (AE1000-0)

SECONDARY A (F4 Star)

SECONDARY B (K8 Star)

SECONDARY FAR COMPANION (G5 Star)

TERTIARY A (K5 Star)

TERTIARY B (K5 Star)

Tertiary 1	(Small Gas Giant)
Tertiary 2	(X510000-0)
Tertiary 3	(Small Gas Giant)

QUATERNARY M8 Star)

Quaternary 1	(X54A000-0)
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DISTANT COMPANION (M4 Star)

Distant 1	(Super-Earth)
Distant 2	(Large Gas Giant)
Distant 3	(X000000-0)
Distant 4	(X511000-0)
Distant 5	(Large Gas Giant)

Points of Interest

All bodies of this system are influenced by changing gravitational forces depending on their relative position and receive varying amounts of stellar energy. These dynamic conditions may sometimes perturb a planetoid out of its orbit but the system is complex, not chaotic. For the most part the interactions produce an intricate dance that will prove a challenge to model but do not present a danger of the system's equilibrium collapsing.

Primary 3 has breathable air and sufficient water to support a thriving ecosystem but is subject to constantly varying conditions making life hard for its plant and animal life. Most species live in sheltered areas created by thick fern-like growths which create a high covered zone up to two metres high. Within these low fern-forests there are innumerable insect and arthropod species. The majority of more advanced creatures are egg-layers; thecodonts vaguely similar to a heavily insulated version of a Terran crocodile occupy most of the higher ecological niches. The ecology of this world is only just compatible with human metabolism, meaning that any plant or animal matter gathered here has low food value and may contain toxins or chemicals that cause an unpleasant reaction. Primary 3 might therefore be considered a rather benign example of a biological hell-world.

Primary Companion 1 is a large world with jagged mountain peaks reaching high enough that atmospheric pressure is almost zero at the summits. The upper reaches of these mountains are only slightly eroded, creating weird shapes and spires. Occasionally a lower section, worn away to create an arch or overhang, collapses and brings one of these spires down. Others are millions of years old and will stand for millions more.

The world's atmosphere has a breathable gas mix but pressure is very low. Only at the bottom of deep valleys is it sufficient to support humans unaided. Most of these are narrow canyons or fissures or bowls containing the world's small seas. There is a single area, dubbed the Great Tectonic Rift by the mission's scientists, where there is useable land. This inverted island of habitable terrain has inland seas and high hills. These would be hazardous to ascend as breathable air runs out fast as altitude increases. Most of the world's plant and animal

species live at this altitude, with only moss and similar plants capable of growing elsewhere. This isolated ecosystem is entirely unique and extremely fragile.

AN EXPLOSION OF LIFE

Crowded System

This system orbits a K2 (orange) star and is characterised by a great many terrestrial planets. Primaries 5 and 6 are a binary pair of planets, turning around one another as they follow a common stellar orbit. Many of the planets in the system have atmospheres but only one is breathable. The rest are inert with the exception of Primary 3, which has an insidious atmosphere and oceans of exotic chemicals. The second planet is habitable, if a little warm for comfort, and has a rapidly developing ecosphere. This is equivalent in many ways to the Cambrian period on



Earth. Arthropods are the dominant form of life, with hundreds of species on land and far more in the seas. The latter might be dangerous due to the size of some creatures but there are no significant threats to humans on land.

PRIMARY (K2 Star)

Primary 1	(Large Gas Giant)
Primary 2	(X877000-O)
Primary 3	(X5CA000-O)
Primary 4	(X520000-O)
Primary 5	(X3A1000-O)
Primary 6	(X7A2000-O)
Primary 7	(X6AA000-O)
Primary 8	(X6A1000-O)
Primary 9	(X520000-O)
Primary 10	(X7A2000-O)
Primary 11	(X000000-O)
Primary 12	(X5A6000-O)
Primary 13	(X510000-O)
Primary 14	(X8A1000-O)
Primary 16	(X200000-O)
Primary 17	(X000000-O)
Primary 18	(X620000-O)
Primary 19	(X000000-O)
Primary 20	(X7A1000-O)
Primary 21	(X4A2000-O)
Primary 22	(Small Gas Giant)

Points of Interest

The second planet is undergoing a rapid development of life, with thousands of new species appearing in the last million years or so, likely fuelled by a change in the planet's atmosphere. Primitive life in the seas began producing oxygen as a by-product of life processes, gradually changing the atmosphere from a carbon-dioxide-nitrogen mix to an oxygen-rich one. This had the effect of making the planet toxic for most species but those that were oxygen tolerant began to flourish in the new environment. Runaway change has produced a world at the very beginning of its life-bearing phase.

Most species on this world are arthropods, with trilobite-like creatures the most advanced. In shallow waters it is possible to encounter giant centipede-like creatures that scuttle along the seabed on their many legs. Feeding is accomplished by acting as a living ramjet, taking in large volumes of water and sifting out anything digestible. The largest of these can reach six metres in length, whereas the biggest creatures on land are horseshoe crab-like crustaceans less than half a metre in length.

DYNAMIC INSTABILITY

Binary Pair System

This system centres on a pair of near-identical M3 (red) main sequence stars. There are five terrestrial planets in the system, all of which have atmospheres of some sort. Only that of the innermost planet is breathable and even this requires the assistance of a filter mask. All planets in the system have significantly elliptical and eccentric orbits; the innermost is not much more elliptical than average but the deviation from the norm increases with distance from the system's primaries. The inner planet has a fair amount of plant life but no advanced animals. Its climate is harsh due to variations in average temperature caused by the relative position of the suns.

PRIMARY A (M3 Star)

PRIMARY B (M3 Star)

Primary 1	(X743000-O)
Primary 2	(X420000-O)
Primary 3	(X8A1000-O)
Primary 4	(X5A1000-O)
Primary 5	(X3AA000-O)
Primary 6	(Small Gas Giant)

Points of Interest

The second, third and fourth planets are all unstable; Primary 2 is observably in the process of breaking up. It is losing its atmosphere to space and currently trails debris behind it as it orbits. The other two are in less disastrous condition but have a great deal of volcanism and plate movement. The third planet is currently suffering a massive lava outpouring, which has created enormous lava plains and filled the atmosphere with ash. New eruptions break through the new crust from time-to-time, building layers of cooling magma hundreds of metres deep. It is not initially clear what caused this disruption but the presence in nearby space of a rogue gas giant suggests it may have passed through the system and been almost-captured, perturbing orbits and disrupting the equilibrium of an already fragile system.

GASSY PLANETS

Trinary, Two Close Companions

This system centres on an M5 (red) main sequence star, which is orbited at a close distance by two brown dwarfs. Both have a few small moons but one has managed to hang on to a planet-sized moon. This body is in a tight orbit that exposes it to significant stresses and may not be entirely stable. The system contains two low-density gas giants and a high-gravity terrestrial with an extremely dense atmosphere.

PRIMARY (M5 Star)

COMPANION A (Brown Dwarf)

Companion A 1 (X600000-O)

COMPANION B (Brown Dwarf)

Primary 1	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 2	(X9D1000-O)
Primary 3	(Low Density Gas Giant)
Primary 4	(X3A0000-O)
Primary 5	(Low Density Gas Giant)
Primary 6	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 7	(X8A1000-O)

Points of Interest

The two low-density gas giants are composed mainly of lighter gases and lack a rocky or metallic core. Using either to refuel would require diving very deep into the atmosphere or making multiple passes over an extended period. Conditions within the atmospheres of these planets are less turbulent than normal gas giants, enabling research craft to spend an extended period there. Pressure does eventually reach the point where the atmosphere becomes liquid.

The high-density planet has a surface gravity of 1.6gs and a super-dense atmosphere of methane and nitrogen. It is possible to work outside a ship in a normal vacc suit at high altitudes but the pressure soon reaches the point where seals begin to fail. Anyone slipping down a mountainside or venturing out of a craft without a hostile environment suit is doomed unless they are quickly rescued. The world is barren and probably lacks any but the most basic life. Mosses, algae and the like are common; there are no animals. However, the density of this world suggests a large concentration of heavy elements within its crust. This might make it a good site for replenishment of materials ranging from basics like iron to radioactives and rare heavy elements.

DYING WORLDS

Pre-Giant Star System

This system centres on a K5 (orange) star that is in the early stages of swelling up into a giant. It has already engulfed its innermost planet and caused the breakup of another, resulting in a belt of planetary debris, which

may or may not settle into stable orbits before being swallowed up by the expanding star. There is a gas giant on the outer edge of the system which has been ejected, and the innermost remaining planetary body is the dense rocky core of a former gas giant. As the gas giant's atmosphere was stripped away by the expanding star, pressure changes caused its core to fissure. It is only a matter of time before it breaks up completely and the next planet out – a terrestrial – is also undergoing the same process.

PRIMARY (K5 Pre-Giant Star)

Debris	
Primary 1	(Unstable Super-Earth)
Primary 2	(X821000-O)
Primary 3	(X200000-O)
Primary 4	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 5	(Small Gas Giant)
Primary 6	(X510000-O)
Rogue	(Small Gas Giant)

Points of Interest

The former gas giant has left behind a large rocky core with a surface gravity of 1.2g, surrounded by the remains of its former atmosphere. The surface has deep cracks and is prone to violent seismic quakes but is stable enough in some areas to land upon. This is an opportunity to study the composition of a gas giant core and perhaps collect some useful materials.

The second planet was once habitable. Rising temperatures and a harsh solar wind have stripped away its atmosphere and caused its oceans to dry up. The remaining atmospheric envelope is too thin to breathe but contains oxygen and, here and there, patches of hardy life cling to a precarious existence. Around the oceans are thick salt and mineral plains which could easily be harvested, whilst the formerly submerged rock strata may be of great interest to planetologists. This planet is doomed to complete destruction within a few hundred thousand years but the Travellers have a chance to document its final days.

ENCOUNTERS: THE HAIX

The Haix are a starfaring race who appear to have gained jump drive technology from another 'young' race or polity. Which one is up to the Referee, and will depend on where the Haix are encountered. It is likely their benefactor was one of the powers in the Far Side of Nowhere region but this can be reassigned as needed. The Haix are unique to a small region or at least they have never been encountered anywhere else, so transplantation by the Ancients or some other means is unlikely.

Haix are semi-aquatic, having evolved on a world with higher than normal surface gravity. Most humans find them rather disturbing when first observed, largely due to the way they move. Haix are unusual in that they display complex trilateral symmetry, with a roughly oval central body featuring three clusters of three boneless tentacles at each end and an egg-shaped head with three huge eyes set 120° apart. The mouth is atop the head and lined with sharp teeth.

The lower tentacles are adapted as legs and extremely strong. One tentacle in each cluster of three is larger than the other two and ends in a single claw; the other two split into a fan of tentacular 'toes'. Similarly the smaller upper tentacle clusters each have a dominant clawed digit and two smaller ones with fingers. As a result of this arrangement a Haix moves rather awkwardly on land, toddling about on its lower tentacle clusters in a manner that would be amusing if the motion of the tentacles were not observed. The way a Haix slithers one tentacle from each group forward then pushes itself with the other two produces a motion that many bipeds find unsettling. Coupled with constant motion of the upper tentacle groups the whole effect is reminiscent of a patch of seaweed flexing and bobbing in the ripples.

The reason for this strange arrangement of limbs is obvious once the Haix' natural habitat is noted. They are shallow-water predators, adapted to diving into pools or watercourses and chasing down prey underwater. Although they are air-breathers Haix can function underwater for several minutes and dive to depths of over 50 metres without assistance.

Haix can function in a human-centric, dry environment but are not comfortable there. Their ideal artificial environment has an uneven floor and a covering of fresh water varying from 20 centimetres to a metre deep, with at least one full-submergence pool. This is not merely for social and fitness reasons; Haix can eat cooked food but prefer to chase their own dinner. The pools in a communal dwelling serve as dining areas with live fish served as often as possible.

Haix have two genders, with reproduction taking the form of spawning in the same pools they use to eat and exercise. Indeed, a Haix 'dinner party' will likely see some eggs deposited in the water and possibly fertilised. Young are ignored as they develop and may be eaten without a thought. Those that survive a year or so cease to be considered food after this time, although the exact point a Haix young makes the transition from being just another aquatic food source to a prospective person seems to depend largely upon how plentiful other food is at the time. Once considered offspring rather than dinner the young are cared for in a distinctly offhand manner until they reach the age of about six Terran years. It seems that any Haix that manages to last this long deserves a proper start in life and is adopted by an adult – not necessarily a blood relation – to be taught and educated. Adulthood usually occurs around 20 Terran years, with an average life expectancy of 90–100 years.

SOCIETY

Haix are aggressive shallow-water predators, prone to be territorial. This has translated into a rather head-on approach to science, commerce and other activities, with internal politics and empire-building interfering with collective effort but often producing highly effective leaders. Groups are not arranged along family lines but described by a word that translates as 'Associations', which are theoretically voluntary. In practice an Association will often coerce a prospective member to join if it is thought they will be an asset. Membership of an Association is usually for life; even those forced to join are unlikely to consider leaving no matter what opportunities exist. As a result the coercion process is vigorously resisted by strong-willed

individuals. This may be a factor in their subsequent loyalty; an Association that can force a Haix to join has proven it is worth belonging to.

Larger organisations are typically built as Associations-of-Associations, again with very firm bonds once a group has given its allegiance. This can lead to bloody conflicts where neither side is able to countenance surrender and it is not uncommon for an Association to be completely wiped out rather than subjugated.

As a result of their instinctive behaviour the Haix are poor scientists but good traders. Most of their advanced technology was purchased from other starfarers at a price well below what might be expected. The majority of Haix do not really understand the science behind the equipment they use; even their tech manufacturing Associations tend to rely on black-boxed applications of known concepts rather than innovating. The Haix are capable of producing TL9 equipment but it is debatable whether they can really be considered a TL9 society in the usual sense. They have traded for the applications of science rather than going through a learning process that might lead to understanding.

Trading Associations

The Haix have colonised a small area around their homeworld but their ships range more widely. An Association might own only one trading ship plus a home base but some have small fleets. The trade ships are supported and protected by vessels known as 'Predators'. These are small combat ships with no cargo capacity, serving only to defend their trade vessel or attack competitors. Even the most powerful Associations are incapable of putting together a real military force and the concept is alien to the Haix.

Control of a territory is measured as the ability to feed or take resources from that area without opposition. In the past an Association would move into a territory it wanted and drive off the current inhabitants but conflict would be between individual Haix. Groups might gang up on an individual but this is as organised as warfare ever became on the Haix homeworld. So it is with the trading Associations; they think in terms of one trade ship supported by a few Predators. A trade ship needs to be powerful enough to operate freely in its chosen territory. It does not need to exert total control over the area; only to enter whatever ports its operators see fit and to 'feed' on the trade opportunities available there.

The trade Associations are engaged in constant rivalry with one another but open conflict is rare. More commonly the weaker Association will take its ships elsewhere or humbly wait in orbit until the stronger Association has finished 'feeding'. This term can cause alarm among outsiders but it translates from the Haix language into 'gaining resources or benefit' rather than destruction or consumption. That said, the bargaining style of many Associations can be compared to a feeding frenzy.

A Haix trade ship will typically carry a mix of trade goods tailored to the local market. Where possible the Haix prefer to deal with an agent, selling their goods in bulk and moving on. However, it is not uncommon to encounter smaller Haix trade vessels at a port where they have been in residence for months. So long as the ship can 'feed' on the local market there is no real need to move on. Many of the Haix' trading partners – if partner is the right word – 'victim' might be closer – are low to mid-tech races who find themselves handing over large quantities of precious metals or bulk resources in return for a few trinkets.

The hallmark of an exhausted market is an impoverished local economy and piles of bulk resources sitting next to a landing pad waiting to be shipped home. Often the proceeds of a trading expedition will be used to fund another elsewhere, so these goods can stand for years before being collected. Some Associations do not even bother to collect them; they simply send a representative a few years later to sell the resources back to the locals at an inflated price.

USING THE HAIX

The Haix have a small core region but the 'feeding ground' for their ships is much larger. A trade ship might be encountered making an ambitious jump-1 transit out to a previously unexplored region or parked in the same place it has lain for nearly a century. These ships-in-place are effectively cities, often using their manufacturing equipment to provide TL9 goods to the local economy in return for resources. A world that has a Haix ship-in-place is likely to be heavily influenced by its Association, who will want to act as middle-men when the Travellers arrive. This might cause all manner of interesting complications as the Haix present themselves as spokespersons/rulers/something-impressive-but-vague on behalf of the locals.

HAIX TRAVELLERS

Haix are strong and tough as a result of their evolution on a high-gravity world. They are not graceful on land, however, and prefer either a semi-aquatic environment or a low-gravity one. In low gravity, Haix can anchor themselves with either set of tentacles and spring confidently from one anchor point to another. For this reason most working spaces within a Haix ship are held at 0.1g whilst living areas are normally provided with 1.3g to prevent pools of water floating around and causing a nuisance. The fact that these conditions are unpleasant for most of the species encountered by the Haix is an incidental benefit.

Characteristics

Haix Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: STR+3, END+3, INT-1, EDU-3

Traits

Haix Travellers all possess the following traits:

Clumsy On Land: When operating on dry land in fairly normal gravity conditions (above 0.3g), Haix are clumsy and slow. Any check that involves whole-body movement such as melee combat or playing a sport is subject to DM-2.

Predatory Trader: The Effect of any trade-related checks, including Persuade, Diplomacy and Broker, are doubled. This can be negative, as the Haix' instinct to go for the kill can derail a deal or offend a client so much they pull out. This predatory nature also results in negative Effect from any interactions with non-Haix (such as a failed Carouse check) to be doubled. Quite peaceable people have been known to assault a Haix who just thought he was being funny.



HIGHGUARD: HAIX

Living Area: Haix require only a little more living space than humans in terms of volume but their living requirements are more complex. Living space for one Haix is equivalent to a stateroom plus two tons of common area, all of which is configured as a multi-environment space. More luxurious accommodation is available for important individuals or what would be called 'honoured guests' elsewhere. To a Haix this means anyone they are going to a particularly great effort to fleece.

Additional social areas are similar to standard common areas but again configured as multi-environment space. Four tons per Haix (in addition to their personal living space) is considered basic social area provision. Ten tons per Haix is considered luxurious. The equipment to make this a multi-environment space is included in the cost and tonnage.

Areas aboard a ship set up for non-Haix are identical to those found in *High Guard*. Staterooms and common areas set up for humans can be used by Haix if necessary, but this is uncomfortable at best and detrimental in the long run.

	COST (MCR)	TONS	POWER
Living Area, Basic, for one Haix	5	6	1
Living Area, High Quality, for one Haix	10	10	2
Living Area, Luxurious, for one Haix	25	20	4
Social Areas, Basic, per Haix	0.5	4	0.1
Social Areas, Luxurious, per Haix	2	10	0.25

HAIX PREDATOR

The Predator design is standardised throughout Haix society, with very few variations existing. It is shaped roughly like a Haix, in the form of a tubby cylinder and configured as a 'tail lander' although Predators rarely land on a planetary surface. More commonly they dock in a cradle that holds the craft upright. This configuration is inefficient in a small ship but suits the Haix mindset. Access between decks is by way of a central tube, which has no artificial gravity. A fine mist of water particles is constantly suspended in the tube, giving a Haix passing between decks the feeling of swimming. Most other species find this form of transit rather unpleasant.

Drives and power plant are located on the lowest decks, equivalent to a Haix' leg-tentacles, with the command area well forward. In between lie accommodation decks, which are capable of supporting 18 Haix in comfort or up to twice that number for a short time. Complement can vary, since Predators are crewed by an Association as part of a larger Association-of-Associations. Typical complement is around 14 including gunners, engineers and other shipboard personnel, as well as low-status individuals who act as servants to the ship and crew.

The Predator is a combat vessel but its low Tech Level provides few opportunities for excellence. Instead, Predators are built to take punishment, with heavy hull armour and internal bulkheads. Notably the jump drive is not protected by an armoured bulkhead – a Predator can fight on without it, so it is considered expendable. The armament of seven laser turrets is distributed as two equidistant rings of three turrets – one forward and one aft – with the seventh turret on the nose of the ship. This turret is referred to as 'the teeth' and usually operated by the leader of the Association, who also commands the ship.

HAIX PREDATOR

XX

CREW

CAPTAIN, ASTROGATOR,
PILOT, ENGINEERS X2,
MEDIC, GUNNERS X7

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Mcr16429/month

.....
PURCHASE COST
Mcr197.155

POWER REQUIREMENTS

70

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

140

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

70

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

45

WEAPONS

308

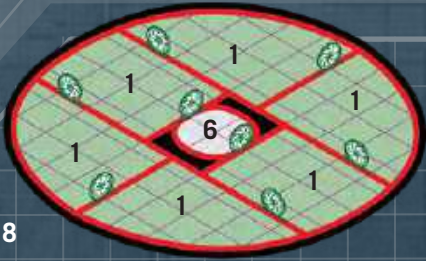
HULL POINTS

TL9		TONS	COST (MCR)
Hull	700 tons, Close Structure	—	3.15
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 9	210	0.945
M-Drive	Thrust 1	7	2
Jump Drive	Jump-1	22.5	33.75
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power: 350	35	17.5
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 8 weeks of operation	147	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge	20	3.5
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Triple Turrets (pulse lasers) x7	7	12
Armoured	Power Plant	3.5	0.7
Bulkheads	M-drive	0.7	0.14
	Bridge	0.35	0.07
	Turrets	0.7	0.14
Systems	Medical Bay x2	8	4
Living Area	Basic x16	96	80
	High Quality x2	20	20
Social Area	Basic, Capacity 20	80	10
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
Cargo		41	—

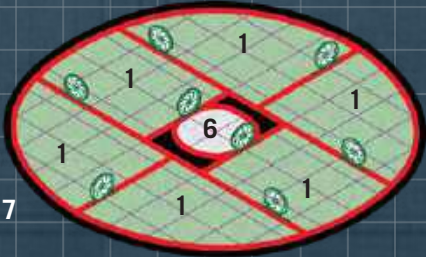
TOTAL: MCr 197.155



Deck 8



Deck 7



Deck 6



Deck 5



Deck 4



Deck 3



Deck 2



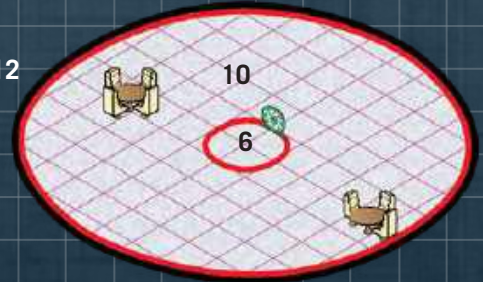
LEGEND

- 1. Living Area
- 2. Medical Bay
- 3. Power Plant
- 4. Jump Drive
- 5. Manoeuvre Drive
- 6. Access Tube
- 7. Bridge
- 8. Sensors
- 9. High Quality Quarters
- 10. Social Area
- 11. Cargo Hold
- 12. Air Lock
- 13. Dual Turret

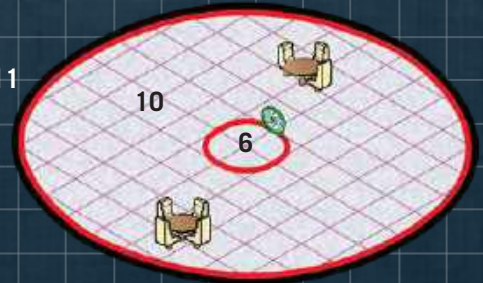
Deck 13



Deck 12



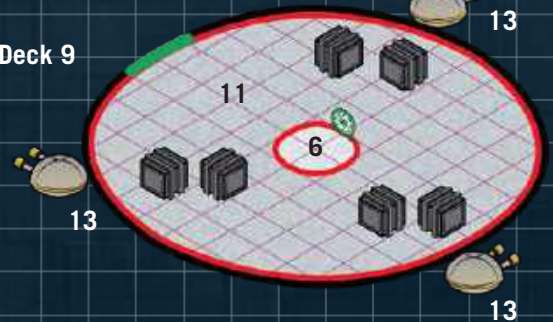
Deck 11



Deck 10



Deck 9



Deck 1:
Fuel only, 2 Decks High

HAIX TRADE SHIP

The trade ships of the Haix are standardised, with a few minor variations. Most use the same 15,000 ton disc configuration, although a few larger and smaller ships have been sighted. It is likely these vessels were designed by someone else to the specifications of the Haix, who lack the ability or desire to go through the lengthy process of developing competence in starship design.

General hull form is a close structure, with a central disc topped by a dome-like protrusion. Control spaces and critical machinery are housed in a central tubular section, surrounded by cargo space. Seen from the side, with a little bit of wishful thinking, the layout resembles a standing Haix. Drives, power plant and the like are on the lowest decks, general systems and accommodation for the Association's members are located in the central area and command spaces are in the dome or 'head'.

Trade ships are designed to land and overawe potential victims – or 'trade partners' as many like to think of themselves – and accordingly have a belly-lander configuration. Decks are connected by the same zero-g tubes as other Haix ships and Haix traders seem to delight in not warning emissaries about them. This might be sadistic amusement but is more likely a tactic to throw visitors off balance so they can be more efficiently plundered in the ensuing negotiations.

Surrounding the central tube section are three wedge-shaped segments. Each of these is identical in size but the contents vary. Some ships have entirely different contents in one or more of the segments, depending on the preference of the Association running the ship. In some cases part of a segment is removed and replaced with a docking area for one or more Predators. The layout here is typical for a commercial and trading vessel.

The Commercial Zone contains a 500-ton commercial area, with shops and recreation facilities to put foreign traders off their guard. There is also a 1,700-ton cargo area served by a high-precision gantry crane array. This cargo area is often used to display goods for sale and may be considered an extension of the commercial zone proper.

The Industrial Zone contains a 250-ton basic manufacturing plant dedicated to producing goods for general consumption. With sufficient resources it can turn out 25 tons of saleable items per day. This segment also contains a 1,950-ton cargo area, which may be used to marshal those resources. Its overhead crane system connects to the other two segments through large cargo doors.

The Manufacturing Zone contains a 250-ton specialist manufacturing plant that produces luxury goods and components. With the right resources it can produce five tons per day. The segment also contains a 1,950 ton cargo area.

The remainder of the ship's cargo capacity is within the main tube section and used for secure storage of equipment and valuables. The nine missile bays are stacked in threes on the periphery of the disc section, between the segments, with missile magazines located immediately inward of their respective bays. The laser armament is distributed in batteries of three triple turrets across the upper surface of the disc section and around the base of the dome.

The normal crew complement is around 70 personnel, although the ship can be flown by 20 or less. Most of the additional crew are workers in the manufacturing and commercial sectors, who can double up as gunners or technicians. Typically, servants and medics are also carried along with personal guards and specialists attending upon the Association's leaders. The actual personnel mix can vary considerably depending on the mission and the size of the Association. Social spaces are rather generous, partly as a status symbol for the operators and partly to impress visitors to the ship. To this end there is a multi-environment area in the main tube section, which can be configured as accommodation for guests or used for entertainment.

HAIX TRADE SHIP

XX

TL9		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	15,000 tons, Close Structure	—	67.5
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 2	750	3.375
M-Drive	Thrust 1	150	300
Jump Drive	Jump-1	22.5	570
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 7,500	750	375
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 8 weeks of operation	3,150	—
Bridge		60	75
Computer	Core/40	—	45
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Small Missile Bays x9	450	108
	Triple Turrets (pulse lasers) x99	99	396
Ammunition	Missile Storage (288 missiles) x9	216	—
Armoured Bulkheads	Power Plant	75	15
	M-drive	15	3
	Bridge	6	1.2
	Missile Bays and Magazines	66.6	133.2
Systems	Multi-Environment Space (100 tons)	105	2.5
	Medical Bays x10	40	20
	Cargo Crane (2,000 tons) x3	49.5	49.5
	Commercial Zone	500	100
	Manufacturing Plant (Basic, 25 tons/day)	250	50
	Manufacturing Plant (Specialist, 5 tons/day)	250	250
Living Area	Basic x80	480	400
	High Quality x20	200	200
Social Area	Luxurious, Capacity 100	1000	200
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
Cargo		6319	—
TOTAL: MCr 3367.375			

CREW

CAPTAIN, CAPTAIN, PILOT,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS X12,
MAINTENANCE X5, MEDIC,
GUNNERS X36, STEWARDS
X3, ADMINISTRATORS X9,
OFFICERS X5, MANUFACTURING/
COMMERCIAL CREW X40

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Mcr28.0614/month

• • • • •
PURCHASE COST
Mcr3367.375

POWER REQUIREMENTS

1,500

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

3,000

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

1,500

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

1,287

WEAPONS

6,000

HULL POINTS



Deck 5

Deck 4

Deck 3

Deck 2

Deck 1

1 SQUARE = 5 TONS

LEGEND

1. Bridge
2. Sensors
3. High Quality Living Area
4. Air Lock
5. Access Tube
6. Triple Turrets Cluster
7. Social Area
8. Living Area
9. Medical Bays
10. Cargo Hold

11. Cargo Crane
12. Manufacturing Plant (Basic)
13. Commercial Zone
14. Manufacturing Plant (Specialist)
15. Missile Bay and Storage
16. Multi-Environment Space
17. Storage Area
18. Power Plant
19. Manoeuvre Drive
20. Jump Drive

ENCOUNTERS: THE DEWDELLAE

The Dewdellae are a former starfaring race who used slower-than-light vessels to colonise a wide area. Their interstellar civilisation flourished around 100,000 years ago then collapsed, leaving behind colonies on widely scattered worlds. It is possible that some colonies did not regress and that there are high-technology enclaves on some worlds but the Travellers' initial impression of the Dewdellae will be of low to mid-tech people. It may not at first be apparent they came from another world.

The Dewdellae evolved from large flightless birds and retain many of the characteristics of avians. Their bones are light and relatively fragile and they retain sharp claws on their three-toed feet. Their wings were useless for millennia before they became sentient and gradually evolved into arms ending in three long fingers and a short thumb-spur.

Dewdellae are naturally carnivorous, although their diet is typically made up of a range of foods. They have a fast metabolism and small stomach, making it difficult to subsist on low-value bulk foods so any vegetable matter consumed must be high-energy, high-protein or otherwise possess a considerable value-to-bulk ratio. To the Dewdellae, farming is mostly about raising fodder to support their herds, plus specialist crops. A Dewdellae forced to eat the typical starfarer's diet will be constantly over-full and lethargic yet under-nourished.

Dewdellae lay eggs, typically in clutches of between two and four. New borns require a large volume of food, normally provided using traditional feeding tools. These have great symbolic importance and are displayed proudly in the home of a couple who have raised one or more offspring successfully. Feeding tools are important presents to be given when a couple announces their intention to make a home and breed but only certain relatives and high-status individuals are permitted by custom to bestow tools upon the pair.

Young are more or less helpless for the first months of their lives and cannot feed themselves until they are around three years old. This makes raising a family a major task for both parents and often workers will be given a leave of absence to do so. Once the young are

strong enough to move around and feed themselves, they are proudly displayed around their home settlement. This takes the form of a rather bizarre family outing where the youngsters tour the homes of friends and possibly favourite eating places too. They feed voraciously during each visit, often demanding food from their parents around mouthfuls of others have offered.

This 'first feeding' as it is called goes on for a period of weeks or months, at gradually increasing intervals, until the youngsters have grown considerably. Important neural development also takes place during this time; these few weeks or months can shape the character of a Dewdellae individual for life. Once the growth spurt is over the young develop at a steady pace until they reach maturity at about 9-10 years. Life span is around 40 years for an individual with access to good food and decent medical care.

SOCIETY

Dewdellae are a social people but prone to constantly jostle for position in what might literally be called the 'pecking order'. Leadership positions are in theory transient but a capable and assertive individual will usually manage to retain any position they attain. A charismatic Dewdellae will typically gather a group of followers who stay with them as they change roles. If one of the followers successfully challenges for the leadership position the displaced leader usually remains with the group in a lesser position. There is no disgrace attached to losing leadership; it is accepted by all Dewdellae that this is just something that happens.

Social institutions are generally charismatic in nature, although the Dewdellae do not think of it in those terms. When a position is first created an individual will take possession of it and stay there until someone else ousts them or they move up the ladder and vacate a job that is now beneath them. A leader cannot retain his position without the support of others, creating a de facto democratic system. However, powerful individuals can use their followers to intimidate others – Dewdellae society is as prone to produce dictators as it is to create popular charismatic leaders.



Large-scale endeavours are normally undertaken by collective effort, with leaders directing the efforts of their followers in a generally useful direction. However, due to the turbulent nature of Dewdellae society leaders may not be very knowledgeable about the current area of endeavour. A great scientist will never rise to a leadership position unless they are also a great leader, for example. The two are not mutually exclusive but typically Dewdellae are led by generalists rather than experts and not always inclined to listen to those experts. As a result scientific progress has been slow and society has stabilised at TL5. Great things were once accomplished by the ancestors of the Dewdellae but it is not clear whether this was in spite of their rather chaotic nature or if society has changed since then.

The Travellers might be puzzled by the Dewdellae, especially if they are thought to be native to one world then encountered far away, with a different level of technological development. They might at first be mistaken for Droyne but there are significant physical and social differences. The Dewdellae are definitely of avian origin; rather than just resembling birds they *are* intelligent, flightless birds. Their society is characterised by endless noisy chattering, minor spats that involve little more than posturing and even more noise, and sudden

flitting from one endeavour to another. They are among the most disorganised people the Travellers have ever encountered, yet somehow manage to make progress and can respond to a crisis with great determination.

USING THE DEWDELLAE

The Dewdellae have spread over a wide area and can be encountered living on any habitable world. Their colonies range from neo-barbarism to pre-starflight, averaging around TL5. They are natural prey – or trading partners, depending on the viewpoint – for the Haix. A Haix trade ship might be present at a Dewdellae colony either making a visit or on a permanent basis. There are many Dewdellae colonies that have not yet been discovered by the Haix, however.

The Travellers might encounter traces of failed Dewdellae colonies on various worlds; they can be used as an explanation for questions like 'why are there ruins on this planet' or as people to interact with when the Referee wants a planetside adventure. This removes the necessity to create another race or society every time sentient people are found. The Travellers might even create a mini-campaign for themselves, tracing the origins of the Dewdellae and piecing their story together.

DEWDELLAE TRAVELLERS

Dewdellae are lightly built, and rather fragile as sentient creatures go, but nimble and fast. Average body mass is 50-55 kilograms for both males and females. Dewdellae are strong for their size but their overall mass means an individual will typically be weaker than a human. They can move as fast as a human on the ground but have a curious hopping gait that looks more than a little comical. Their natural covering of feathers makes clothing unnecessary other than for carrying items or providing protection.

Characteristics

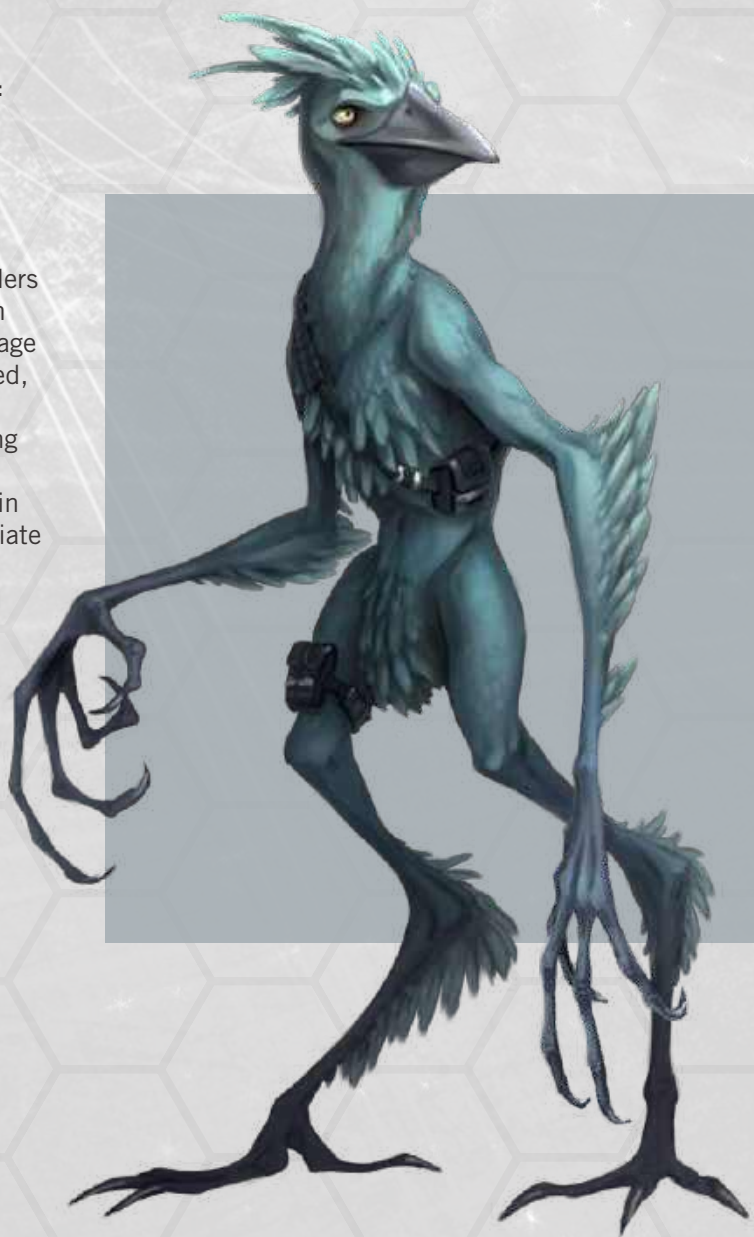
Dewdellae Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: STR-2, DEX+1, END 1D+2

Traits

Dewdellae Travellers all possess the following traits:

Chaotic Society: The Dewdellae constantly jostle and bicker among themselves, attempting to exert dominance over others at their social level or push themselves up into a higher strata. This is normal behaviour for the Dewdellae but wearying for Travellers not used to such behaviour. Anyone interacting with Dewdellae on a long-term basis must make an Average (8+) Leadership check every 2D days. If this is failed, the Traveller might not notice straight away but the Dewdellae will become more 'difficult' about obeying instructions and may outright refuse some requests just to show they are not subordinate. A proper chain of command means nothing to them if their immediate superior has lost their confidence. A second failed Leadership check means the Traveller is considered inferior and will not be obeyed. Indeed, if they expect others who perceive their social status to be higher than theirs to do what they say, they will be put in their place. This will usually be limited to posturing and noise but a mobbing might occur in extreme cases. Mobbing is intended to cause fear and pain rather than lasting injury but a Traveller who successfully fights back could find they have picked a serious fight with multiple Dewdellae.

Disorganised: Dewdellae are notoriously difficult to keep on-task. Their usual working pattern is a flurry of activity followed by a period of faffing around that makes no sense to outsiders. Individuals and small groups will flit from one part of a task to another or even go off to join another working group for a while before coming back with renewed energy. This turbulent working style is usually inefficient but sometimes a group of Dewdellae will somehow outdo humans attempting the same task. The leader of any working group should make a Difficult (10+) Leadership check. Efficiency is modified by 10% per point of Effect, so a check with Effect-3 results in a 30% reduction in output or the task taking 30% longer.



ENCOUNTERS:

SPECIES GROUP FIRBOLG

The Firbolg can be encountered anywhere the Referee needs a humanoid species for the Travellers to interact with but it is assumed here that they are resident in the Far Side of Nowhere and/or Voidshore regions. If they are placed in those regions they will be known to the scientists of the FSN region and the name 'Firbolg' will have been applied locally. If they are not native to this region, a member of the *Deepnight* expedition may hit upon the same connections and apply the name or the Travellers might assign a completely different one.

The Firbolg name comes from mythology. In ancient Celtic legend, the region of Old Earth known as Erin was inhabited by a tribe who migrated elsewhere. Many of them were enslaved in another region known as Greece and made to carry heavy loads for their masters. The name given to these captives was Firbolg or 'bag men' for the large sacks they used to bear their burdens. Over time these sacks became so encrusted with dirt they were waterproof, enabling the Firbolg to escape captivity by using their sacks as boats. By this means they returned to Erin and took control of their old homeland. The Firbolg were eventually defeated by a new wave of invaders, against whom they fought fiercely.

Scientists in the region lack any reasonable explanation as to how the Firbolg moved between worlds and are prone to say they 'might well have sailed through space in sacks'. Where the Dewdellae are thought to have used generation ships a few tens of thousands of years ago the Firbolg have clearly been on the worlds they inhabited for much longer than that and evolved differently to suit their environments. Where the Dewdellae arrived more or less in their present form, the Firbolg were about as close to their current forms as *Homo Hiedelbergensis* is to modern humans. This suggests a time frame of 5-900,000 years and accounts for the development of multiple related species.

Thus, the Travellers may discover humanoids on various worlds, who arrived there in a relatively primitive state of evolutionary development. Examination of Firbolg specimens suggests their brains were too small and not sophisticated enough to make more than basic stone tools and evidence of social evolution on the worlds they inhabit suggests that populations advanced in isolation thereafter. Some attained sentience and even a technological society; others remained at the smart-animal level or became extinct. Examination also indicates that whilst Firbolg on many worlds have evolved to closely resemble humans they have no DNA connection with any species in Charted Space and are not interfertile with Humaniti. The many species that the Firbolg evolved into are generally referred to by the collective term 'species group Firbolg'. Whilst characteristics are generally similar to humans, Firbolg from different worlds may vary in appearance quite considerably.

SOCIETY

Firbolg societies vary enormously. Those that evolved into sentient people have typically reached TL3-7. Some are barbarians, some may be starfarers. Their societies reflect the influences upon their evolution and social development. Societies can be generally broken down by stages of evolutionary and technological development:

Proto-Firbolg: Some populations never developed full sentience, remaining on the border between animals and people. These vary physically depending on their homeworld but tend to form small family/clan groups. A nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle is most common.

Low Firbolg: Low Firbolg are fully sentient but not necessarily very intelligent. TLO societies are most common, with some of the smarter Low Firbolg groups reaching TL1. The term 'Low Firbolg' refers to social sophistication more than Tech Level. Low Firbolg societies tend to be rather basic, with 'barbarian' clans and tribes numbering several hundred to a few thousand individuals.

ORIGINS OF THE FIRBOLG

The Firbolg were not spread by the Ancients. It is possible they were carried aboard the slower-than-light starships of another race, perhaps as planet-taming workers. If so, no traces of that race have yet been found. The origins of the Firbolg will remain a mystery for now. In the meantime the Referee can use them to populate inhabited planets rather than needing to invent a whole new race each time the Travellers find civilisation.

Mid Firbolg: Mid Firbolg have achieved a reasonable level of social sophistication, which might or might not be accompanied by a higher Tech Level. Most Mid Firbolg societies are complex and large, with nations or even a planetary government. Tech Level can range from basic iron use to the industrial age (TL1-6, with an average of TL3-5).

High Firbolg: High Firbolg societies are rare. Most have formed a world government, with TL5-9. A High Firbolg civilisation is likely to be exploring its home system and may have outposts throughout it and may have launched missions outside its solar system. A true starfaring High Firbolg civilisation is entirely possible but no evidence of one has been recorded.

USING THE FIRBOLG

The Firbolg can be encountered almost anywhere and may be simply a convenient species to place on a world when the Referee needs a civilisation, barbarian kingdoms or anything in between. The Travellers might encounter differently-evolved members of the species group and not initially realise they are related. Firbolg might also be encountered among other starfaring races either as integrated citizens or emissaries, merchants and mercenaries. Indeed, Firbolg soldiers might be used by a starfaring power or corporation in preference to their own people, for a variety of reasons.

FIRBOLG TRAVELLERS

Firbolg vary depending on the conditions in which they evolved. Proto-Firbolg are smaller than their more evolved cousins and vastly less intelligent, whilst evolved Firbolg are very similar to humans.

Characteristics

Proto-Firbolg Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: STR-2, END-2, INT D3, EDU 0

Low, Mid and High Firbolg typically have characteristics similar to a human from the same environment. Thus a Firbolg from a high-g world might have increased STR and END; one from a low-tech 'barbarian' society might have a very low EDU.

Traits

Firbolg possess no inherent traits due to their species but may gain traits relevant to their society or environment. These can be assigned by the Referee as necessary.



INCIDENT:

SHARKS AMONG THE PIGEONS

In the course of their expedition the Travellers enter a system with a habitable world. Long-range scanning indicates a single power signature. This would normally imply a colonised world with a low population – just a few thousand perhaps – concentrated in a single area. However, as the Travellers approach it becomes obvious there is a significant population on-planet. Cultivated areas can be made out, surrounding settlements of varying size. Initial estimates place the population in the tens of millions, with an estimated TL2–3.

The countryside is dotted with modest sized towns, each surrounded by smaller villages with wide areas of wilderness between the major settlements. The landscape is – for the most part – unspoiled. The exception to this is in the region of the power signature. It is surrounded by a much larger city, with a web of roads stretching out to nearby towns. The landscape here is scarred by open-cast mines and the occasional abandoned settlement. Within the city is a large metallic structure, circular with a domed top. It appears that the city has been extended around it over the course of the past few years.

There are fortifications around the city, in the form of a ditch-and-rampart earthwork strengthened by bastions at key points. Close inspection reveals the muzzles of what appear to be artillery pieces poking from embrasures on the bastions and riflemen manning the gates. The city itself has a military quarter, with a cleared area around the domed structure. A paved road runs from the structure to the city's main gate.

The structure is obviously a grounded starship and one that has been in place for several years at least. The city is partially electrified, with power provided from the starship. It is clear that a smaller settlement has been greatly expanded within the space of a few years and that the starship was once located just outside a modest sized town. Now it seems to play the role of a palace or citadel at the heart of a much larger city.

Buildings in the city are of similar construction, mostly of wood, but vary in size and splendour. Much of the housing is either small homes jammed together around

narrow streets or larger three-storey buildings serving as tenements. A lot of these are new-built within the past few years and in good condition but living standards in those parts of the city are likely to be low. There are also what appear to be middle-class neighbourhoods with much more spacious houses and a significant number of large dwellings with their own fenced-off grounds. These mansions typically have an accommodation block for servants and staff, either appended to the building or in the grounds.

THE CITY OF GRANTRAD

The city is populated by Dewdellae, as is the rest of the planet, but dominated by a grounded Haix trade ship. This gives the city its name; a corruption of 'Grand Trade'. The Haix arrived 15 years ago and began their customary economic conquest of the locals. They are now the de facto rulers of the city and its immediate environs, creating a society quite different to that of the rest of the planet.

The Dewdellae of Grantrad are well-dressed in colourful clothes and mostly have access to high-quality machined tools. Domestic appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers can be found in most homes. Even the poorest tend to have some sort of appliance and luxury goods and there is a vigorous culture of keeping up with neighbours or having something they do not. All these items come from the workshops and factories of the Haix ship, of course, and are produced using materials mined or otherwise sourced in the surrounding regions.

The people of Grantrad are militarised and, by the standards of their world, rich. The city is run by the Grantrad Corporation, which is entirely staffed by Dewdellae and is not – officially at least – controlled by the Haix. The reality is that the corporation serves the interests of the Haix, who dwell in luxury within their starship/fortress and slowly expand their control over the region. Corporation soldiers protect the city and other holdings from 'rebellious elements' in the countryside. For this they need uniforms, arms and ammunition,

which have to be bought from the Haix. Generous salaries are paid to loyal servants of the company and spent on goods from the Haix' manufactories.

The pattern is typical of the Haix. They arrived as friends and sold desirable goods at low prices. They invested in businesses and attracted large numbers of people to the area with promises of well-paid jobs. The rather crude electrification of the city allowed gadgets and devices to be successfully marketed to the population, who were manipulated by expert marketing schemes into becoming addicted to consumerism. Producing these goods meant the local markets could not get enough of the required raw materials that now had to be taken from the territory of others. This created ill-feeling and eventually conflict.

In 15 years the Haix have created a city-state populated by addicted buyers, who happily sign up to serve in the military in order to take control of more resources to fuel the expanding market. One-by-one the surrounding towns are being subjugated, largely through economic activity, and every bullet fired in defence of this expanding empire is bought from the Haix. Occasionally a freighter comes through to pick up large quantities of ore or craftsman-made high-value goods that can be sold elsewhere and in the meantime the Haix gradually expand their holdings.

The Travellers will find the people of Grantrad self-satisfied, superior and extremely materialistic. They will be jealous of ostentatious wealth that exceeds their own and derisive towards anyone not displaying comparable riches. They are also contemptuous of those living outside the influence of the Haix trading Association, referring to them as 'rabble', 'barbarians' or 'rebels' much of the time. In fact there are no 'rebels', as there has never been a power structure with authority over the rural settlements. The whole idea of these 'rebels' and their barbarous desire to burn down the cradle of civilisation is nothing more than a marketing campaign on behalf of the Haix.

GRANTRAD TRADING ASSOCIATION

The Association that has taken control of Grantrad – or more accurately, created it out of a much more pleasant rural town – is led by a Haix whose name translates as 'Grantrad President'. Haix names tend to be descriptive of their role and place in society and

can change as their fortunes do. Grantrad President is naturally wary of other spacefarers, since they might interfere in his long-term plans. These, typically for his kind, revolve around taking control of the entire continent, perhaps even the world, and having its inhabitants plunder their own resources for him to ship offworld and sell to other Associations.

In time the Association will start putting more advanced items onto the local market but this is most effectively carried out by exploiting ('feeding on', in Haix parlance) every increment in performance and desirability. He will put forward the idea that he is conducting a benevolent technological uplift of the Dewdellae population, gradually introducing new concepts and technologies at a sustainable rate without causing too much social distortion. It is not all that likely the Travellers will buy this line but it is a standard one used by Haix Associations.

The President will not tolerate interference in 'his' market. He will see anyone trying to do business with the locals as a threat and anyone challenging the world-view his marketing people have created will be considered an enemy. On the other hand, if the Travellers are willing to do business with his Association he will deal hard but fairly with them – he knows who he can exploit and who to play more or less fair with.

THE TRAVELLERS

Grantrad might pose a moral dilemma for the Travellers. The local population are not enslaved but they are clearly being manipulated to the benefit of the Haix. On the other hand, they will resent anyone who interferes with their lifestyle and readily fight against the Travellers. These people have been so thoroughly indoctrinated that they do not wish to be 'liberated'. 'Doing the right thing' and breaking the Haix' hold over Grantrad might be bloody and will deprive the population of technological items they have come to depend on. They are also at odds with many of the surrounding populations and may be vulnerable once the immediate supply of ammunition runs out.

This incident can play out in a variety of ways. It may be just an interesting piece of colour as the Travellers pass through the system and buy some goods from the Haix, or the Travellers might fall foul of local custom and have an awkward time during their stay. A war of liberation is also a possibility if the Travellers are that way inclined.

INCIDENT: WINDS OF DESTRUCTION

The Travellers detect a star system ahead with skewed sensor readings. It seems that the overall temperature and radiation levels in the system are higher than would normally be expected. Emissions are fuzzy, as if from a warm gas cloud, with multiple hotspots at irregular intervals throughout the system. Approaching more closely, it is clear that the system includes gas giants but their arrangement seems anomalous. It is highly unlikely the orbits and thermal readings being detected can be stable and it does not appear that conditions in the system will be dangerous to *Deepnight Revelation*. This system has been designated ASM-148.

ASM-148 SYSTEM

The ASM-148 system centres on a K6 (orange) main sequence star, which has five planets. The third, a small gas giant, marks the inner boundary of a wide void, with the outer two planets at great distances from the star. The inner two planets have more typical inner-system orbits. The whole system is pervaded by what might be described as a warm gas cloud that has multiple large masses within it. These lie somewhere between a large gas giant and a brown dwarf in mass but are hotter.

The orbits of the two outer planets have been significantly perturbed. They always lay in far orbits but both have been disturbed, probably by the gas cloud masses. ASM-148 4 may eventually settle into a new orbit closer to the primary but the fifth planet has gained just enough momentum to eventually leave the system. This will not take place for thousands, or even millions, of years so for now its orbital plot represents a spiral that slowly increases in radius.

ASM-148 PRIMARY (K6 Star)

ASM-148 1	(X624000-O)
ASM-148 2	(X9A1000-O)
ASM-148 3	(Small Gas Giant)
ASM-148 4	(X200000-O)
ASM-148 5	(X600000-O)

The second planet lies just outside the system's 'warm' zone. Until recently its surface was sufficiently cold that the little water present remained in a permanent icy

state. However, over the past few thousand years the increased temperature in the system was sufficient to permit the planet's carbon dioxide-nitrogen atmosphere to trap a little more heat. The result is that ice is melting in some areas and the overall temperature of the planet is rising. There is no possibility that life might have developed on such a short time frame but the effects of a planet in flux may be interesting to scientists from *Deepnight Revelation*.

The innermost planet is suffering the opposite effect. The majority of its atmosphere has been stripped away over the past few thousand years, leaving it incapable of supporting life. The oceans are drying up and evaporating at an increasing rate and soon this world will be a rockball. However, conditions in the system are changing all the time. It is possible that something may be left when the system returns to normal.

A WIND OF DESTRUCTION

The ASM-148 system is currently experiencing the passage of a large cloud of stellar gas ejected from another star in a weak supernova event. The 'hot spots' are relatively dense clumps of stellar matter that have remained concentrated as an elongated ovoid on the path of propagation. Vastly cooler than when they formed part of a star, these clumps of gas are still hot by cosmic standards and emit a considerable amount of other radiation besides heat. It was the passage of one of these hot spots close to the innermost planet that destroyed its atmosphere.

The changing conditions in this system will certainly interest space scientists, who can track the 'wind of destruction' through several other star systems to a weak supernova event caused by a white dwarf orbiting close to a more typical star. Material pulled from the donor star eventually reached sufficient mass to cause an explosion, a process that can be repeated several times before both are exhausted.

INCIDENT: PEACEMONGERING

The Travellers encounter a system containing a habitable world. More intriguingly there are radio signals from its surface and close orbit. There are many power signatures and obvious large cities on the surface, with typical infrastructure patterns of a long-inhabited world; it is clear the Travellers are dealing with an intelligent race, probably at their homeworld. This incident assumes they are Firbolg but any other species with equivalent capabilities could be substituted.

At first the local population does not respond to attempts at contact. The reason for this may become apparent as the Travellers move into orbit but initially it is likely to be puzzling. The locals call their world Ginyara and are convinced it is their original homeworld. They are aware of the possibilities of travelling to other stars but thus far have not got any further than orbit – other than a few automated probes to other planets in the system. Tech Level is a uniform 6.

Ginyara has two superpower blocs and around 50 other nations, most of which are aligned with one superpower or the other. A third power bloc, much weaker than the others, consists of 12 nations in a loose alliance, which attempts to resist the influence of the major powers. At present, Ginyara stands on the brink of war. The reasons for the conflict are longstanding and convoluted but ultimately come down to tensions between superpowers and the squandering of limited resources in an arms and space race that threatens to bankrupt both superpowers.

The United Federal Republic is the more unified of the two. Formed from multiple small states long ago, it has grown steadily ever since. Its primary tools of conquest are cultural and economic; no state has ever been subjugated by force, although a few applied for membership after receiving generous aid in response to a natural disaster or internal conflict. The UFR favours relatively low-technology or low-complexity solutions to its problems and fields reliable and proven weapon systems rather than aiming for top-end capability.

The Tasac Alliance is better described as being the powerful nation of Tasac and its 'allies', many of which are conquered or coerced states. Tasac favours high-technology systems, few of which can be built by its allies. Its own armed forces are universally equipped with the best available and allied forces are required to maintain a proportion of their equipment to this standard. Costs are such that the majority of forces fielded by the allies are equipped with last-generation or cheaper 'export' versions of Tasac equipment.

Both superpowers have a large nuclear arsenal and their ballistic missile capability translates to a potent heavy-lift space programme. As a result both have orbital stations. The UFR has several smaller stations, from which it can launch orbital kill-vehicles – rather basic low-powered devices intended to take out satellites and possibly parts of a station. It is also armed with a handful of small missiles. The Alliance station is much larger and serves as a staging post for exploration probes as well as mounting a battery of missiles to threaten the opposing stations. All these installations are frighteningly vulnerable to attack.

Both superpowers are alarmed by the arrival of *Deepright Revelation* and such is their paranoia that their first reaction is not to contact the newcomers but to threaten the other if they interfere with efforts to do so. Angry exchanges have already been flying back and forth between diplomats and military posturing has begun. Forces are placed on high alert and are conducting 'exercises' right on the borders of disputed territories. Missiles are ready for launch and air forces are probing the territories of the other side. The whole situation could ignite into nuclear conflict at any moment.

THE TRAVELLERS AT GINYARA

The Travellers receive messages from both superpowers more or less simultaneously. Both are obvious attempts to establish communication with unknown aliens – basic mathematical constructs, patterns and other deliberate

evidence of logical thought. Whilst the locals are trying to establish a baseline for some form of meaningful interaction, the systems aboard *Deepnight Revelation* can translate their language from signals received.

Both powers are sending more or less the same message. Both claim to be the main power on Ginyara and invite the Travellers to a diplomatic reception in their honour. Both warn the Travellers about the deceit of the other power and strongly recommend against having anything to do with them. If the Travellers are observing the situation on-planet they will note obvious signs of a military standoff. This will only escalate over time.

If the Travellers obviously favour one side or the other, war will inevitably break out. It is unlikely to be intentional but as one power tries to bully the other an incident occurs – probably a provocative incursion into airspace resulting in a shoot-down. Tit-for-tat retaliation escalates and soon a shooting war has begun. At this point there is a very real risk that one side or the other will decide its best chances of winning are to use tactical nuclear weapons and, as this may provoke a strategic response, the only hope is a first strike. The first the Travellers may know of this is when they detect missile launch plumes. These might be mistaken at first for intense space launch efforts or a threat to *Deepnight Revelation* but it will soon become apparent that a nuclear strike is in progress. Retaliation will begin moments later.

Things may not get this far. It is possible the Travellers will be able to create a diplomatic solution and perhaps even foster cooperation between the two superpowers. Refusing to deal with either and sending emissaries to a smaller state will not work – whoever looks like they will become allied to the starfarers will be an instant target for the others. The two most extreme possibilities offer the best chance of success. If the Travellers just leave, it is possible the locals will have less to fight over or may decide to band together against a possible offworld threat. A more risky option might be to make that threat seem real.

If the Travellers do some minor damage like shooting down a few satellites from both sides, they might attract a response in the form of reprogrammed nuclear missiles or feeble orbital kill-craft. These can easily be fended off but this in turn only emphasises the powerlessness of the Ginyarans. This could be the moment they start working together and making progress instead of attempting to prevent the other achieving anything. It might be fun to pretend to be the ‘bad guys from outer space’ for a while and the Travellers might even demand some tribute into the bargain. Such a solution has its risks but it could create a long-term solution to the standoff on Ginyara.

A more diplomatic approach will take longer. Both superpowers are deeply suspicious of one another and all other states are suspicious of both. The Travellers run the risk of jealousy and mistrust derailing their well-intentioned efforts to deal fairly with all concerned. Once embroiled in the local political situation the Travellers may not be able to leave without running the risk of triggering a war. One interesting option is to place a cache of valuable knowledge and technology on an outsystem world and give each power part of the knowledge needed to get it. If they pool their knowledge they will be able to build a craft to reach, locate and open it. If they fight over the spoils they will get nothing. This might actually work, since it requires long-term cooperation without the Travellers having to arbitrate every dispute along the way.

There are many other options, of course. How the Travellers deal with the fact that their arrival has become the flashpoint for an already tense situation is, as usual, entirely up to them. If they do a good job they may save Ginyara from nuclear destruction and perhaps help the Ginyarans venture out among the stars. A weaker performance might result in the Travellers shooting down both sides’ missiles as they try to halt a war they are at least partially responsible for.

ADVENTURE: HILLFORTS OF ENTRATA

This adventure can be placed almost anywhere. As written, it involves a population of low-tech Firbolg and as such would be a useful introduction to the species group. When the Travellers later encounter an enclave of higher-tech Firbolg far away, they will realise there is more to these people than an isolated population on one world. The adventure needs a world with an ecosystem and atmosphere capable of supporting a TL1 society, so might occur when the Travellers survey a possible resupply site.

THE FIRBOLG OF ENTRATA

The people of this world call it Entrata, as near as the Travellers will be able to pronounce the word. This translates as 'our world/home/place' as do many homeworld names in their native language. The people do not call themselves Firbolg and up to now had no idea there were other sentients in the universe. Thus they do not have a species-specific name for themselves; they are just 'people'. Human or humanoid Travellers will be assumed to be just like the locals, whilst aliens will inspire curiosity in some but deep fear in most.

The people of Entrata know nothing of evolution or the idea there may be other worlds out there. They have no legends of arriving on this world from elsewhere and have never come across any sign of technological wonders like the Travellers want to show them. They have oral histories, recalled and recited as epic poems by their bards, which go back multiple generations but rapidly become vague about exactly what happened. A determined attempt could put together a general history of the past 2-300 years in a few days, and might develop a patchy idea of the past 1,000 after a few weeks of correlating oral histories with archaeological evidence.

The picture that emerges is of a people who have 'always been here' and are part of the world's ecosystem. All that can be discerned from the histories is that the people of Entrata have had a bronze-age society for at least 1,000 years and not progressed from tribal society in that time. Archaeological work – which

would take weeks at least – will produce skeletons of Proto-Firbolg, which may lead the Travellers to believe they are native to this world. That is partially true; they have been on Entrata so long that they might as well have evolved here.

There are tens of millions of Firbolg on Entrata, although all are confined to a single continent and its outlying islands. This is a typical pattern for a race that evolved there and who never attained ocean-crossing technology. The Firbolg are mostly divided into tribes and confederations of tribes whose leadership systems are typically loose and based on charisma rather than hereditary rule. There are exceptions but these tribal kingdoms are no more advanced than any others.

Settlements are mostly villages of at most a few hundred people, usually with an earth rampart and wooden palisade as fortifications. Tribal capitals and a few key locations are secured by hill forts, which serve as political, military and religious centres. The Firbolg of Entrata have a polytheistic belief system that deifies parts of the natural world such as the sun, wind and rivers. This is a common type of belief system and there is nothing to suggest it has links to any other.

The tribal confederations sometimes war with one another and occasionally experience internal conflict. Wars are short and typically bloody but rarely involve more than a few hundred combatants from either side. Raiding is more common, taking the form of cattle-theft most of the time but occasionally involving the massacre of a stead or even a whole village.

ARRIVING

The Travellers will not receive any replies to their messages when they enter orbit and will not detect any power signatures. The existence of some kind of civilisation is obvious even from orbit – there are cleared forests, warm spots signifying settlements and obvious signs of agriculture around them. It rapidly becomes clear this is a low-tech world and visual observations will soon confirm it is a pre-industrial society. There are no large ships, just a few coastal fishing vessels, and no roads between settled areas.

The locals will be terrified at seeing a spacecraft approach. Their reaction will be to flee into buildings or under the cover of foliage, which is not unexpected. Sooner or later small groups will begin to creep back. Some will be armed with tools, hunting bows, wood axes and similar implements, whilst others have had time to grab their weapons. For most this means a spear and round shield but there are bronze swords here and there, and it is possible that leaders will possess body armour and a mount.

The Travellers should have a protocol in place for first contact – this is unlikely to be the only occasion they meet someone new. How they go about establishing contact is up to them but overall it will go far more easily if there are no non-humans present. Firbolg closely resemble humans, creating a semblance of normality in a highly unusual situation. Indeed, groups without non-humans may find themselves treated as emissaries from a distant tribe that speaks a different language – strange but familiar. Those with aliens among them will encounter much more fear and suspicion. This is not due to bad experiences in the past – the locals have had no offworld contact – but any aliens present will be entirely outside the locals' experience and thus unnerving.

The local language is unique and will need to be translated. However, it is easier than most since it was developed by creatures with the same hearing ranges and vocal apparatus as humans. With artificial aid it should be possible to converse, in a limited manner, within a couple of hours and fluently in a few days. However, hearing words come out of a magic box will terrify the locals.

FIRST CONTACT

The Referee should consider the first contact situation from the point of view of the Firbolg. They had no idea that a craft can fly until one landed in their fields. Strangely dressed people came out, along with others that might be people, animals or something else. These newcomers have magic boxes that talk to them, objects that produce light without flame, tools that seem to work by themselves. None of these things are natural and they inspire fear.

The Travellers may fail to realise just how frightening they are. Normally a contact situation is not completely 'cold' – that is, the people being contacted are often aware they are not alone in the universe and/or have a familiarity with the sort of tools and equipment starfarers might use. A powered core sampler might impress rather than frighten someone familiar with the

concept of steam engines but to a person who has no idea that an object can move by itself the core sampler might be considered evidence of witchcraft and devilry. It is also possible that equipment with a demonstrably positive purpose might become objects of veneration, which is potentially just as much of a problem.

The most likely scenario during first contact is a cycle of building a rapport only to have it broken when someone starts using a medical scanner or soil sampler. The Firbolg of Entrata are used to conflict and quite willing to employ violence if circumstances require it. They also have absolutely no idea what a firearm or plasma gun can do and may think they can overpower a small group of newcomers. The only way to prove differently, unfortunately, is to employ advanced weapons and cause casualties. This in turn will escalate the situation.

If the first contact is well handled it will be fraught but does not need to turn violent. To facilitate this, the Travellers must first develop a non-hostile relationship then build trust. This is not a quick process and can go horribly awry at almost any point. The earliest stages are the most hazardous; once some degree of rapport is established there is a chance to salvage a misunderstanding or incident that frightens the locals.

The general state of relations between the Travellers and the locals is indicated by their Relations Index. The Relations Index is determined at the beginning of a first contact situation and varies according to the Travellers' actions. Whenever a significant incident occurs, such as an encounter between locals and a research party or an inquisitive local caught trying to sneak into the Travellers' vehicle or craft, there is a chance of violence. To keep a situation from becoming violent a Diplomat check at the appropriate level is required, as shown on the Relations Index table.

Violence does not necessarily mean an armed uprising. Any violence that occurs will be proportionate to the situation and the people involved. For example, a local caught stealing from the Travellers might shove someone over and run away, causing only minor injuries. However, the situation can escalate – especially when the locals are frightened or the Travellers have responded in a heavy-handed manner to previous incidents. In some situations the Relations Index can be used without a Diplomat check, as a straight 2D roll. For example, if news comes to a tribal leader that the Travellers have beaten and robbed some of his people, the Referee should roll 2D. If violence is indicated this means that – at the least – the leader will take an armed party to confront the Travellers and will be ready to fight if he does not get what he wants by way of recompense.

Relations Index

RELATIONS INDEX	LOCALS' STATE	DIFFICULTY TO AVOID VIOLENCE
0	Terrified and Threatened	Very Difficult (12+)
1–5	Terrified	Difficult (10+)
6–10	Frightened	Average (8+)
11–15	Wary	Routine (6+)
16–20	Neutral	Easy (4+)
21–25	Friendly	Simple (2+)
26+	Familiar and Friendly	None

Terrified and Threatened indicates the locals are deeply frightened of the Travellers and alarmed about what they might do in the near future – whether fairly or otherwise. This may or may not be justified; the locals may fear they are sorcerers due to their technology, when obviously they are not. This state is only likely to occur if the Travellers mistreat the locals to the point where their intentions seem suspect or if someone starts spreading rumours and false information, blaming them for actions or circumstances that have nothing to do with them.

Terrified indicates the locals are deeply frightened of the Travellers but do not perceive an imminent threat. They may fear the Travellers could do something terrible in the longer term but are unsure if it will happen. Terrified locals will for the most part try to avoid contact with the Travellers but some may try to gain advantages over them or drive them away. Actions taken out of fear may not be rational and could inflame a situation or make an otherwise unlikely escalation of hostilities near-certain.

Frightened is the natural state of low-tech people when others descend from the skies and start displaying devices that seem to defy nature. Frightened locals will not, for the most part, be irrational but will try to avoid contact with the Travellers. Some may try to propitiate the Travellers with gifts, others may act tough to try to scare off the interlopers. Bold actions can be taken out of fear, so a state of Frightened should not be taken to mean the locals are cowering in the bushes.

Wary is the default state of anyone in this society who does not know and trust the new arrivals. Strangers often cause trouble, so trust takes time to establish. Wary locals will deal fairly with the Travellers but limit their interactions and watch for signs of ill intent.

Neutral is the typical relationship between members of the same clan or village who are not friends or family. A Neutral state indicates the Travellers will not attract

more than a curious glance or polite greeting as they pass in the street. They will be trusted as far as anyone trusts people they do not really know but are not actively avoided.

Friendly is a difficult status to achieve, reflecting some warmth and a measure of trust. Friendly in this context does not necessarily mean the Travellers have close friends among the locals but they are friendly in the same way as a fair-dealing merchant who has passed through the village on several occasions.

Friendly and Familiar status indicates the Travellers have built relationships with the locals. They are sufficiently well known that many local people can say ‘they wouldn’t do that’ with a degree of certainty if the Travellers are accused of negative actions. Mutual understanding has developed to the point where a Traveller might do something out of the ordinary or produce a device that might normally frighten people without causing alarm. The locals might not know what the device is but they know the people using it mean them no harm and often do strange things. In short, the Travellers’ otherness has become accepted and no longer causes alarm.

Relations Status

If the Travellers are able to approach the locals wearing similar clothing and speaking their language – and they look like they are from this planet – then the Relations Index starts at 12 (Wary). This is an unlikely first contact situation, however. If the Travellers are clearly very different from local society in terms of clothing, language and some minor devices, starting relations are 7 (Frightened). This drops to 2 (Terrified) if the Travellers are seen landing in spacecraft or have non-humans among them.

The conditions of initial contact will be determined by this attitude and the Travellers’ actions. If they present themselves in a non-threatening manner – small numbers, no aggressive actions or gestures, no inexplicable devices – they are less likely to scare off the first people they meet than if they act like a military unit or start unloading gizmos with flashing lights and strange noises. Most people the Travellers meet are likely to decide the situation is above their pay grade and try to find a leader. A few are sufficiently clever or greedy to think they can take advantage of the situation and may try to establish themselves as emissaries without really understanding what is going on.

Each time an incident occurs the Referee should check to see if it becomes violent. Violence in this case could mean nothing more than a shouting match and some rude gestures but there is always the possibility for

escalation or an attempt at revenge. Someone faced down by a group of Travellers might later catch one of their crew alone, creating a delayed incident. An incident in this context can be almost anything but the Referee should use violence checks sparingly. If every attempt to buy a basket of fruit explodes into conflict nobody will get anything done. If the Travellers or someone from their crew is present and tries to defuse the situation, a Diplomat check at the appropriate level will suffice to calm things down. A straight 2D check can be made if the Travellers are not in a position to exert control.

Significant incidents or actions also offer the chance to improve or damage relations. When the Travellers make a positive effort to improve relations, or something happens that might harm them, the Referee should call for an appropriate check. This will normally be Diplomat but a case could be made for other skills. For example, the Travellers might use the Broker skill to set up a deal such that the locals think they have had a good bargain without suspecting they are being allowed to succeed. Likewise, the Travellers might make a positive gesture, such as by saving the life of a worker injured in an accident, and may use the relevant skill there instead of Diplomat.

The Travellers should not be allowed to 'grind rep' with the locals by contriving the most effective skill checks or repeating the same actions. The Referee should instead make them think about what they are doing and how to achieve it. Travellers who come up with a good plan and take varied actions should be allowed to succeed. Those who just roll the dice should get to do so only occasionally.

When an action is taken to improve relations, the Effect of an Average (8+) check is added to the Relations Indicator. This can be negative if the Travellers botch the job. Relations should improve no faster than one point per day, on average, but can drop faster if the Travellers strut around bullying the poor dumb yokels.

Actions that can improve relations include but are not limited to:

- Giving 'status' gifts to leaders and practical ones to workers.
- Holding a meeting with local leaders and demonstrating mutual respect.
- Other largesse, such as providing a large amount of high-quality food to assist with a celebration.
- Assisting locals in their work.
- Helping in a crisis or accident.
- Demonstrating how technology is useful but not dangerous in a way that impresses but does not scare the locals.

General good conduct over time will also improve relations. Every D3 days without a negative incident, in which the Travellers act like good citizens and treat those around them with respect, the Referee may allow a Diplomat check to improve relations. At the same time, the Referee should consider the possible unintended effects of the Travellers' actions. For example, handing out a decent iron knife to every member of a bronze-age settlement might seem like a good way to win favour but the local metalsmith will suffer as a result and in such societies metalsmiths are typically influential individuals. Brute-force methods of improving the Relations Index may produce unexpected and possibly negative results.

Actions that might reduce the Relations Index or incite violence include (but are not limited to):

- Display of frightening devices without explanation and reassurance.
- Arrogant taking-charge and sweeping aside local power structures, even if well meant.
- Causing harm to someone, especially with an unfamiliar device or weapon, without obvious necessity.
- Sudden appearance of non-humans without good management of the situation.
- Damage or harm connected with unfamiliar devices or equipment, such as a bad small craft landing that kills a valued farm animal.

General bullying or contemptuous behaviour will also potentially spark an incident or cause a possible drop in the Relations Index. Every D3 days of poor behaviour, the Referee should make a straight 2D check. On 8+ the Relations Index is unaffected. Any negative Effect reduces the Relations Index by the same amount.

It is not necessary to make friends with the Firbolg of Entrata. A polite diplomatic stance will suffice to study them, although results will be more easily obtained if the Travellers are on friendly terms with the locals. A stance of Wary, accompanied by orders from local leaders to cooperate or at least not hinder the Travellers, allows some study to be undertaken. However, the locals will at best nervously do the minimum they can get away with before retreating. Anyone who can avoid questioning or examination by the Travellers will do so. As relations warm up cooperation becomes more willing, which will make the scientists' task much easier.

EARLY INTERACTIONS

It is probable that the Travellers' encounters will be with small-village folks and their leaders but the initial contact is entirely up to the Travellers. They might



decide to swoop down from the skies and land in the market square or make a careful and rather more professional approach at ground level to cause less alarm. Whether the interaction draws a crowd, causes a mass panic or goes almost unnoticed is again dependent on how the Travellers decide to proceed but overall a low-key approach is desirable.

Once the Travellers have established some kind of working relationship with the locals they can begin their studies. The Firbolg look more or less human but DNA analysis indicates they have nothing in common with the people of Charted Space. How the Travellers go about obtaining this DNA is up to them. Simply asking to take samples is unlikely to work; locals will not comprehend what the Travellers are trying to do and are quite likely to fear this is some kind of witchcraft. Offering the sort of medical assistance the locals do understand is a better approach – a bloody bandage will supply DNA and helping the clumsy apprentice who badly cut himself will win some goodwill.

Cooperation requires at least a wary stance and the agreement of the local rulers. This will not be given out of goodwill but can be obtained in other ways. Whether this is the Travellers' intent or not, a meeting with the tribal chief will occur soon after he hears about the new arrivals. The Travellers may have deduced that the largest of the nearby hillforts is the tribal capital and may indeed have made their contact at this site. If not, sooner or later a delegation will arrive from the tribal chief and invite the Travellers to the capital.

The particular tribe of Firbolg the Travellers have encountered is known as Tala-Uneth, which translates roughly as 'the people who live in the vale of the river Uneth'. This river and its many tributaries define the territory of the Tala-Uneth people but there are no formal borders. Other tribal confederations encroach at times and control over an area might be lost or regained in a skirmish. Fortified villages serve as strongpoints, with small hillforts constructed in strategic locations.

The largest of the hillforts is the seat of the tribal chieftain. It follows the same general pattern of the others but is larger. Rather than a solid fortification with a wall and gates, the fort relies mainly on elevation and difficulty of reaching its flat top for defence. The hillsides are steep on most approaches, with a relatively easy approach by way of a path up one side of the hill. This is defended by a series of small strongpoints, some of which make use of natural features like boulders to create a defence. Wooden palisades have been set up to impede an attacker and protect archers and there are palisades at the top of the less steep slopes. The entire western face of the hill is protected by a natural escarpment some three to five metres high, making access by encumbered warriors near-impossible. The chieftain's round-house and associated buildings are at this end of the flat hilltop, with housing for the rest of the populace scattered across the top. This is no castle; it is a settlement built in a strong location, relying on an active defence by archers and warriors armed with hand weapons. An enemy slogging up the hillside would be vulnerable to the defenders but without a well-armed garrison the fort is no more an obstacle than any other slope.

The Travellers might be disdainful of the primitive construction they see. Buildings are of wood, with walls of woven sticks covered in some kind of clay-based material. Roofs are thatched and floors of packed earth with some dry grass strewn atop them. Yet there is an artistry to this kind of construction. Houses are warm and keep out the rain, with defences well placed to offer maximum effectiveness for minimal materials and effort. These people are intelligent and inventive, with a society that works.

Most people are farmers, herders, hunters or similar food providers, with a much smaller 'professional' class above them. These are crafters, bards, merchants and doctors; those who require training and education to do their work. Most members of this class are literate, although not to a high standard on the whole, and receive training through a system of guilds and experts in their field. The ruling class are warriors, as is typical of such societies, although only a small number of professional fighting personnel can be supported. Tribe members will turn out with spear or bow to support their warrior leaders, forming warbands whose style of combat tends to be more enthusiastic than skilful.

A tribal leader and his warriors make an impressive sight. Their clothing, typically a tunic, trousers and a cloak, is brightly coloured and well woven. Professional warriors are armed with a bronze sword, shield and a spear, whilst lesser fighting-men have a shield and spear or a bow, plus a long knife. Some carry hurling-axes as well. Lesser warriors do not have armour but professionals will at least have a leather jerkin and an open-faced helm. The very rich might wear chainmail or a leather jerkin reinforced with small metal plates. These are confident, martial people who understand the value of negotiation as well as the use of force.

If the Travellers arrive first at the capital, or accept an invitation, they will be greeted – some would say confronted – by the tribal leader at the entrance to his fort. In this case the greeting will be wary but cordial. If the Travellers did not present themselves, the leader will come looking for them and will be displeased about it. At best this is a breach of courtesy; it could also indicate the Travellers are not well-intentioned. Thus the leader's warband will arrive ready to fight but hoping not to.

IN THE HALL OF THE HILLFORT KING

The leader of the Tala-Uneth people is named Calwon. He is not big for his race but in good physical condition and young for his position. This is not uncommon among the people of Entrata and Calwon came to power legitimately; that is, he was elected by popular acclaim

after the previous tribal leader – who happened to be Calwon's mother – lost the confidence of her people. Nobody will want to tell strangers about how that happened or they may assume everybody already knows. Either way the Travellers will not be given the details of the power shift until they have established a good working relationship with Calwon.

Calwon's position in the tribe is dependent on his reputation and display of power. He is not foolish enough to throw his weight around over petty matters but is intolerant of disrespect. This is not least since defiance or refusal to acknowledge his power is a real threat to his authority. Thus Calwon cannot be seen to be weak or to allow outsiders to disrespect him. At the same time he is a courteous and honourable individual who knows other leaders may be in the same position.

Mutual respect between leaders strengthens the position of both and is in everyone's interest – at least, this is how the game is played in his home society. Calwon knows that he could push a foreign leader into a position where conflict was inevitable, for exactly the same reasons he would have to act if another leader took liberties. He will thus treat the Travellers with respect, as honoured guests and high-status members of their own society. He is young but becoming skilled in the art of diplomacy from a position of strength and expects the Travellers to understand the nuances of the situation as well as he does.

Calwon will invite the Travellers into his roundhouse, which is much bigger than the others in the settlement and serves as a barracks for the most favoured warriors, a town hall and sometimes an emergency cattle shelter. His warriors divest themselves of large weapons at the door and remove their swords to sit. Nobody tells the Travellers to put aside weapons but it would be considered discourteous to sit down to a meal with the tribe's leaders whilst festooned with weaponry. If the Travellers do not have anything that looks like a weapon to lay aside, this causes puzzlement but no offence, and putting aside strange objects that do not look like weapons will be accepted as courteously intended. Calwon will assume the Travellers are very strange people for travelling unarmed but accept they are being polite by copying his gesture of removing his own sword. If he later discovers the 'curious but harmless objects' were actually powerful weapons he will probably be amused rather than annoyed.

The Travellers are presented with the best food the tribe can offer. This is pretty good, if simple, and plentiful. It is accompanied by wines and a rather peculiar but not unpleasant beer. Talking, telling tall tales and generally socialising is encouraged around the table and astute

Travellers will realise that whilst most of the warriors are just telling tales of their adventures, some of the tribe are subtly fishing for information by encouraging the Travellers to boast. Along with the warriors of Calwon's household there are other notables present; senior craftsmen, merchants and bards. Calwon tries to encourage a relaxed, friendly atmosphere in which the occasional diplomatic faux pas can be laughed off and secrets might accidentally be spilled to new friends.

How well or badly the feast goes depends very much on the Travellers. Those who make an Average (8+) Diplomat check will quickly realise that Calwon is treating them with appropriate courtesy but remains wary and suspicious. This is no great surprise; any encounter with powerful strangers would be an occasion for caution. The Travellers' conclusion – which is correct – is that Calwon and his people are behaving honestly – or as honestly as any ruler in this situation can afford to.

After everyone has eaten as much as they can stand, Calwon orders that the spirits be brought out. This turns out to be a high-alcohol distillate taken in small quantities alternating with a rather pleasant fruit infusion. The locals will respect the wishes of anyone who says they do not drink but those who do will generally be considered more friendly, as the taking of strong drink together is an important social ritual that helps build bonds of friendship or seal an agreement. Not coincidentally, getting guests drunk is a useful way of determining their true intentions and limiting their options. Someone who is blind drunk is less likely to start sneaking around with ill intent and will be a lot less competent if they do.

If the Travellers manage to negotiate the nuances of the feast they deserve a Diplomat check to improve general relations. More importantly perhaps, even if relations with the Tala-Uneth people in general are not good Calwon himself will have established a working relationship with the Travellers. This makes him willing to order his people to cooperate with the Travellers providing they are not doing harm and there seems to be some benefit.

CONTINUED INTERACTIONS

With relations established, the Travellers should be able to study the Firbolg of Entrata. Most of what they learn is local history and legend. Whilst interesting to anyone studying low-tech societies, this is a catalogue of wars, plagues, famines and peaceful times in between that sheds no light on the origins of the Firbolg or how they spread. DNA samples and similar medical study

indicates the Firbolg are not related to humans and suggests they did not evolve on this world. Beyond that, there are no answers to be had here.

Continued interactions will be observed by the locals, who may grow suspicious if the Travellers do not display an obvious purpose. The idea of studying people for the sake of knowledge will not occur to Calwon unless it is explained to him and even then he has a hard time believing it. He lives in a hard world where every action has to have a tangible benefit. To him, studying another tribe means learning their strengths and weaknesses in war and trade so they can be exploited. His suspicion that the Travellers are seeking his weaknesses will make him wary. Ironically perhaps, Calwon would be much less alarmed if the Travellers told him they were seeking trade opportunities or something – even if untrue this is a more plausible story than scientific research as far as Calwon is concerned.

The Travellers might indeed engage in some trade but there is a limit to what a low-tech society can offer. The Firbolg have stocks of food they can trade, some of it of very high quality, but little else on hand. They lack the ability to extract bulk resources and cannot produce high-value utility items. They have very good metalworkers and craftsmen, so jewellery and artist objects might be an option. If the Travellers are looking for items of practical value they will not obtain them here but hand-made unique decorative items might fetch a good price somewhere else or please crewmembers.

For their part, the locals will obviously want to obtain the miraculous devices the Travellers use. Some may even try to steal them. If the Travellers are willing to part with guns, tools and other directly useful objects the locals will pay almost any price for them – and Calwon expects to be given as a gift any item on sale to his people. The Travellers could use their ship's construction facilities to mass-produce simple firearms or steel weaponry. This would please Calwon but might upset the balance of power in the region.

What the Travellers offer in trade is entirely their choice. There are no rules about these things and Travellers with a corporate background will be familiar with the business tactic of creating demand and dependency in a local market in order to increase political influence – which in turn allows the business to operate as it pleases. This far from Charted Space there is little point in attempting an economic conquest of the planet or a military one carried out by an economically dependent local power but the Travellers might decide to proceed anyway. If they do, they will certainly alter the course of history on Entrata. It is not possible to say at this point whether it will be for good or ill.

CALWON'S REQUEST

Once relations have become established, or perhaps as an opportunity to patch them up after an incident, Calwon makes a request. He has become aware the Travellers have capabilities beyond those of his warriors and wants their help. The situation is delicate and cannot be solved by a direct attack without consequences he would prefer to avoid.

Calwon's predecessor was a good ruler for many years but eventually became too authoritarian for the tribe to accept. They agree to follow the leaders they elect but not blindly. His predecessor inflicted harsh punishments on several notables who displeased her and had her warriors summarily execute a master metalsmith for speaking out against her tyranny. This was too much for the tribe and armed clashes resulted. The old ruler and her close supporters were driven out and Calwon was elected in her place. This was more than a little awkward, since the previous leader was his own mother. He had actually fought to defend her, out of personal loyalty rather than belief she was right. Calwon's position on that is that when he was a simple warrior in the ruler's household his decision was right but now that he is a ruler he must consider the good of the tribe.

Calwon's problem is that his mother and her most loyal followers have taken over one of the tribe's hillforts. It is not clear to what extent the people of the fort settlement support her but it is likely at least some of them would fight if Calwon attacked. Worse, Ayonni, his own young son, was taken when his mother left the capital and is currently a hostage. Negotiation has produced no useful results, and he cannot tolerate a former leader controlling one of his strongest places. Calwon needs to regain control of that fort one way or another but does not want to fight his mother or risk his son.

Calwon wants the Travellers to solve the problem for him. This is not a 'don't give me the details' situation – quite the opposite. Calwon wants to know what the Travellers can do and how they intend to solve the problem. In an ideal world he wants his son rescued without bloodshed – or perhaps without anyone even knowing the Travellers were there. He would be happy with a surgical strike that caused minimal casualties or used less-than-lethal methods. The best outcome for him is one where his mother no longer has a hostage and can be convinced to go into exile rather than get people killed in fighting over the fort. Calwon is sure she would harm his son if she had to just as he is willing to kill her. None of this is desirable but there seems to be no other way.

Calwon can give the Travellers details of the fort and its population, along with the best information he has on his mother's followers. This cannot be 100% accurate but is a reasonable guide. If the Travellers succeed they will have Calwon's gratitude. He is not willing to bargain on exactly what this is worth – that is not how rulers operate in this society. If Calwon is publicly grateful to the Travellers he will give them gifts and grant requests, and thus be seen to reward those who serve him. To him this is not service for money, it is a ruler granting largesse in return for actions that please him. If the Travellers grasp this, they can get a lot out of Calwon but trying to bargain like he was a merchant will anger him.

The Travellers, of course, do not have to do as Calwon wishes. However, defying him will make the Travellers and their crew unwelcome in the lands of the Tala-Uneth people. Calwon will ask them to leave, then try to force them. This may bring about a fight, in which the Referee can use the warriors presented for Calwon's expected opponents on page 41 – one tribal warrior is very much like another.

LASKI

The target is a hillfort-settlement named Laski, which is much smaller than Calwon's capital. It stands on an escarpment above a tributary of the river Uneth, with extensive reed marshes to the east fed by the river. The north and west sides of the hill are steep, with tumbled boulders and bands of exposed rock 1-3m high making an ascent slow and difficult. The southern and western slopes are shallower, although the latter ends in a reed marsh. A few houses, built on stilts, lie along the edge of the marsh. They are connected by a walkway on piles driven into the marsh bed.

The top of the western and southern slopes is defended by a mixture of shallow ditch, earth rampart, sections of palisade and some sharpened stakes here and there. This would make a reasonable obstacle if well defended, whilst the rest of the hillside would be difficult to traverse whilst carrying war gear. Like the capital, the fortifications at Laski are intended to impede an attacker and assist a vigorous defence. They are not much of an obstacle if undefended, although anyone blundering around in the dark could fall in a ditch or encounter a sharp stake.

The settlement has a population of about 150 people, with a few more living at the base of the hill. Most are farmers or fishermen who work the surrounding lands. Until Calwon's mother arrived there were only a couple of warriors at the fort, plus the villagers who would turn

out to fight, if necessary. The leader of the settlement community strongly supports Calwon's mother, which is why she came here, and the population will follow his lead. Thus the settlement can muster two 'noble' warriors, 12 professional warriors and up to 50 villagers armed with spears, bows and tools such as hatchets or long knives.

The settlement itself consists of the chieftain's roundhouse, currently occupied by the professional warriors, and a scattering of smaller houses and storage huts across the hilltop. Calwon's son is kept in the main building at night but is free to roam around and play with the other children when not being given jobs to do like any child in this society. He is too young to properly understand what is going on and is being treated kindly by his grandmother. Such is the nature of their society that she might have to kill her grandson but she hopes that the threat – backed by Calwon's understanding that she will carry it out if she has to – will suffice to keep him from attacking.

Opposition

The locals have absolutely no idea what they are up against. They have never heard of things like night vision or firearms, sleep-gas or stunners. They can be frightened into scattering by a grav vehicle blaring music from its speakers or some other gambit. There are many approaches the Travellers could take, rather than blasting the top off the hill and searching through the wreckage. The hostage will seek the protection of his grandmother and her warriors as soon as anything frightening happens. He will struggle and fight any attempt to abduct him and his grandmother will defend him with her life. This may seem odd to the Travellers but it is not merely self-interest. She might have to cut his throat but that does not mean she does not love him like any grandparent would. Such is the hard world the Firbolg of Entrata live in.



CILWIN, CALWON'S MOTHER

SPECIES			GENDER	AGE
Firbolg			Female	—
TRAITS			SKILLS	
STR	8	INT	9	Diplomat 1
DEX	10	EDU	3	Leadership 1
END	10	SOC	11	Melee (blade) 3
				Persuade 3
				Survival 1
EQUIPMENT			Weapons: Bronze Sword (2D+2), War-spear (3D), Hurling Axe (2D+2), Round Shield (1D) Armour: Chainmail Hauberk and Helm (+4 vs melee weapons, +1 vs firearms)	



BACKGROUND

Cilwin is in her early 50s. She is a skilled warrior and a ruthless politician who unfortunately also has a foul temper. She was not always so but leadership of the tribe forced her to make some hard decisions and she became angry at the universe in general as a result. She leads from the front and has both the respect and the fear of her followers. She wields both to get what she

wants but ultimately does care for her people and will surrender to save them.

AYONNI, CALWON'S SON

Ayonni is just over three years old. He does not understand what is going on and will be frightened by the Travellers. His combat skills are limited to wriggling and kicking, although he can howl pretty loudly too.

NOBLE WARRIOR

The uppermost echelon of local society are leader-warriors. A community will have no more than a handful at most.

SPECIES			GENDER	AGE
Firbolg			Male	—
TRAITS			SKILLS	
STR	9	INT	8	Leadership 2,
DEX	9	EDU	2	Melee (blade) 3,
END	12	SOC	11	Tactics (military) 1,
				Survival 1
EQUIPMENT			Weapons: Bronze sword (2D+2), War-spear (3D), Hurling Axe (2D+2), Round Shield (1D) Armour: Chainmail Hauberk and Helm (+4 vs melee weapons, +1 vs firearms)	



PROFESSIONAL WARRIOR

Most leaders are supported by a handful of professional warriors, who sometimes deputise for the leader or lead bands of militia in the field.

SPECIES			GENDER		AGE	
Firbolg			—		—	
TRAITS			—		SKILLS	
STR	10	INT	7	Leadership 1, Melee (blade) 2, Tactics (military) 1, Survival 1		
DEX	8	EDU	2			
END	9	SOC	0			
EQUIPMENT				Weapons: Bronze Sword (2D+2), War-spear (3D), Hurling Axe (2D+2), Round Shield (1D) Armour: Jack and Helm (+2)		

TRIBAL MILITIA

Most able-bodied individuals have a weapon and can be called upon to fight. Skill levels are low, since instruction is limited to a few moves shown by an uncle or similar more experienced individual.

SPECIES			GENDER		AGE
Firbolg			—		—
TRAITS			—	SKILLS	
STR	8	INT	9	Diplomat 1 Leadership 1 Melee (blade) 3 Persuade 3 Survival 1	
DEX	10	EDU	3		
END	10	SOC	11		
EQUIPMENT			Weapons: Bronze Sword (2D+2), War-spear (3D), Hurling Axe (2D+2), Round Shield (1D) Armour: Chainmail Hauberk and Helm (+4 vs melee weapons, +1 vs firearms)		

OUTCOMES

In an ideal case the Travellers will slip into the settlement and spirit the child away without harming anyone. A couple of days later Calwon will arrive with a large force – at least by local standards – and offer his mother the chance to go into exile with whoever wants to accompany her. With no bargaining chip, she will accept to save her followers. The two will part peacefully and sadly. Despite the circumstances this outcome will please Calwon since it involves the least bloodshed and disruption to the tribe. His mother may someday return to challenge him but that is a problem to be dealt with if and when it happens.

If the Travellers were less than subtle, Calwon will accept the outcome unless his son was harmed. Ultimately, he has to demonstrate his authority over the tribe's members or lose it, so if the price is a few dead in a skirmish this is acceptable. He will not be well disposed to anyone who harmed or killed his kin but he recognises the necessity and will not make an issue of it.

Truly graphic or deliberately rapacious actions, or allowing Ayonni to come to harm, will earn the enmity of Calwon. He hoped for a clean operation that would

allow him to win without serious conflict – if he wanted the settlement destroyed and dozens dead he could have done that himself. If Calwon is sufficiently displeased with the Travellers he will order them to leave and do his best to make them. This will likely lead to further conflict.

Assuming the Travellers do not make enemies of the whole tribe they will be able to study the Firbolg and their world for as long as they like. Word will eventually get around of the strange visitors and emissaries from other tribes may come to meet them. This could make local politics rather complex, as Calwon tries to exploit any advantages that present themselves and at the same time prevent the Travellers throwing in their lot with outsiders. If the Travellers stay around long enough, a whole campaign could be spun out of this adventure... but sooner or later they will have to continue their voyage.

ADVENTURE: DISPUTED BIRTHRIGHT

This adventure is set in the Far Side of Nowhere region. It could be transplanted elsewhere, however, as there may be more than one enclave of 'super-Droyne'. During the adventure, the Travellers may be able to learn more about these people and their origins. Whether or not they share this information is up to them.

The 'super-Droyne' refer to themselves as Eynastyoi, which translates as 'children of Eynastyusk' – their current homeworld. They have good historical records of the past few hundred years but everything before that is conjecture, myth and legend. Thus the history of the Eynastyoi presented below is for the use of the Referee only. The Travellers may be able to uncover enough of the details to piece together the story of the Eynastyoi but even if they do not the Referee needs to know where these people came from and what influenced them in order to make them consistent.

The ancestors of the Eynastyoi were Droyne, just like the Ancients. The debate as to whether all Droyne of that era were 'Ancients' still rages and it is not clear from the remaining evidence what part of the extensive Droyne civilisation of that time the Eynastyoi originally came from. They reached the Far Side of Nowhere along with all the other Droyne now resident, shortly before the fall of the Ancients' civilisation 300,000 years ago. Cut off from one another, these groups of Droyne went their own way for a few thousand years before Oyskrusk's expedition passed through the region. Two Droyne-inhabited worlds were encountered and the people there were taught how to caste. These worlds produced starfaring civilisations and passed their knowledge on to others they found, not always successfully.

The Eynastyoi were not among those encountered either by Oyskrusk and his crew or by the new Droyne starfarers of their region. They developed in isolation for tens of thousands of years, until a dominant strain emerged. These were bigger, stronger and smarter than the typical Droyne. A parallel could be drawn between this occurrence and the emergence of *Homo Sapiens* to displace weaker forebears. These new Droyne had a turbulent history, with several civilisations emerging then collapsing on their homeworld without reaching a starfaring level of technology.

Eventually the Eynastyoi were contacted by starships from the new civilisations appearing in the Far Side of Nowhere and began a rapid technological advance. Their first ships were launched a few hundred years ago and as they ventured out into the cosmos they discovered other descendants of the Ancient Droyne. Some had regressed to the point they were borderline sentient – the Chirpers as they are known in Charted Space – whilst others had retained the ability to caste and were still physically the same as the Ancients.

This discovery prompted a period of questioning among the Eynastyoi. Should they adopt the casteing process? Were they superior to those who had done so? This idea was based on the fact that casted Droyne had not changed in 300,000 years. Was the casteing process holding back their evolution and was that a good thing? Casted Droyne and Chirpers had one thing in common – they lived a lot longer than the average Eynastyoi.

The Eynastyoi live tragically short lives. They mature into adults very rapidly for a sentient species, taking around eight years to fully develop. The prime stage of life typically lasts just eight more years, after which physical decline is rapid. It is rare to find any among the Eynastyoi older than forty. They are brightly burning candles, physically adept and mentally brilliant, but their capabilities are limited by their life span. By the time an Eynastyoi has learned enough to achieve their potential, they are already well past their peak and will not be effective much longer. Experiments with casteing typically result in malformed and mentally deficient 'failed Droyne' whilst those who succeed in casteing tend not to live any longer and are generally less capable than a non-casted Eynastyoi.

The majority of Eynastyoi consider attempts at casteing to be an abomination, warping healthy children into monsters. Even those who believe some experimentation is necessary are appalled by the results. However, there is a group that believes casteing is the future of the species. If they can just get it right they can achieve the next stage of Droyne evolution, combining the natural advantages of the Eynastyoi with the specialised and enhanced capabilities of casted Droyne. This movement has become what might be termed a 'science cult' and operates in a sinister manner wherever it is not

suppressed. The cult calls itself 'Droyne-iskatty', which translates roughly as 'seekers of the next stage'. Those outsiders who know about this dark part of Eynastyoi culture usually call the Droyne-iskatty movement the 'Evolvers'. Much of their support and equipment come from criminal groups or political entities who do not mind who they do business with.

THE EYNASTYOI

The Eynastyoi do not caste except as part of unpleasant Evolver ritual-experiments. They speak Oynprith like other Droyne but attitudes towards them vary. Most normal Droyne find them vaguely unsettling, since they are people who are 'the same as us but not quite right somehow'. This can lead to strained relations but is not a reason for conflict in most cases. A few Droyne pity them as 'failed Droyne' whilst some accept them as kinfolk and have no problems getting along. The Eynastyoi generally consider themselves to be an entirely separate culture from the casted Droyne and most individuals would not identify as 'Droyne' if someone addressed them as such.

Eynastyoi roll all characteristics except SOC on 2D+3 but have no greater psionic potential than any other Droyne. An Eynastyoi Traveller begins their first term at age eight and begins to suffer from aging effects at 16. Although their decline starts from a high value, it is rapid. Every four years an Eynastyoi automatically loses one point from STR, DEX or END, selected at random, and must make a Difficult (10+) END check to avoid greater loss. If the check is failed the Eynastyoi must deduct the Effect from any one of STR, DEX, END or INT. The Traveller may choose which is decreased but the whole Effect must be removed from one characteristic. There are no known anagathics that work on Eynastyoi.

The Eynastyoi have a TL9 starfaring culture. Their society had reached TL6 – not for the first time – when explorers arrived on their homeworld. The Eynastyoi embarked on an ambitious self-uplift programme, using any offworld technology they could buy or steal as a basis for their own efforts. As a result their technology and infrastructure was heavily influenced by that of the Dual Alliance, but morphed into something a little different as it matured.

The urge to learn and discover more about the cosmos never abated, and the Eynastyoi voyaged widely in their exploration ships. Their progress was hampered by their short lifespans, which limited the amount of experience an individual could accumulate. Expeditions and projects that would not have seemed all that long to most races became the life's work of their leaders, with

lessons having to be learned all over again the next time. Nevertheless, the Eynastyoi have pursued their goal of knowledge and improved technology and are making good progress towards TL10.

STAR SYSTEM OSKTYASK

The star system named Osktyask by the Eynastyoi is unlikely to be in the Travellers' database under that name. They will probably give it a designation or name of their own. The system orbits a typical M2 (red) main sequence star and its brown dwarf companion. The only other bodies in the system are a large gas giant with a large number of small moonlets and a terrestrial planet with a thin but breathable atmosphere.

OSKTYASK PRIMARY (M2 Star)

OSKTYASK COMPANION (Brown Dwarf)

Osktyask 1	(Large Gas Giant)
Osktyask 2	(X655000-0)

Osktyask 2 has a well developed ecosystem and traces of gases present in its atmosphere that might indicate an industrial civilisation. Closer inspection indicates there may have been one but it is no longer present. In fact, a TL4 society existed here until around 500 years ago, at which point it began to suffer a collapse. Burning of fossil fuels and industrial processes that produced the tell-tale traces ceased at that time but significant amounts remain in the air and water. The people of Osktyask 2 did not die out but regressed to near-barbarism over a long period. The reason is not immediately evident.

Approaching the planet, the Travellers will note that there are almost no power signatures and no communications traffic at all. Nothing responds to their signals, not even an automated beacon, but there are ruins of what were obviously early-industrial cities. Parked in the middle of one of them is a starship. It is detected initially as a metallic concentration with a power signature and closer inspection indicates it is of a design reminiscent of – but different to – those used by the Dual Alliance. The ship is in a powered-down, dormant state and does not respond to communications. It appears intact but is wedged into the centre of the city. Landing nearby is possible for a small craft but it will still be necessary to negotiate part of the ruined city to get there. There are also indications that some kind of low-tech people live in the surrounding countryside.

The people of Osktyask 2 were Droyne, among those scattered in the region during the Ancients period. Re-contacted after Oyskrusk's expedition passed through

the region, they were taught how to caste and made several attempts to claw their way up from barbarism to civilisation. Subsequent civilisations collapsed over the millennia, each time using up more of the world's easily accessible resources and making it more difficult for the next incarnation of civilisation on Osktyask 2.

The last flowering of civilisation took place a few thousand years ago, this time reaching a mature TL4. With accessible resources diminishing, the local Droyne struggled to make further progress and stagnated, coming into conflict over energy resources. During one such conflict a virulent infection took hold. Whether this was deliberate biological warfare or not is an open question but large areas of the globe suffered catastrophic population losses. This made it impossible to maintain any sort of technological society, especially since cities were the main centres of infection.

The cities became taboo as society crashed back to a primitive level. Some groups died out, of disease or starvation. Others reverted to a primitive lifestyle and even forgot the casteing rituals. Within two centuries there were no Droyne left on Osktyask 2; only Chirpers. These barely-sentient creatures made a life for themselves as hunter-gatherers or in small subsistence-agriculture settlements. They forgot who they had been but they remembered the cities were bad places. Soon the cities were overgrown and forgotten but Osktyask 2 was kind to the Chirpers. They needed little from the land and where high-energy resources had grown scarce there was meat to be hunted and edible plants to be grown.

The Eynastyoi on Osktyask 2

Centuries later, a ship arrived with a crew of Eynastyoi explorers aboard. They noted a population of what they called proto-Droyne on Osktyask 2, who had clearly regressed. Debate began about what might be done. Were these proto-Droyne happier this way? Some thought they might be, for their simple lives were untroubled by the complexities of advanced civilisation. Were the people of Osktyask 2 a world of poor benighted savages, denied their birthright as intelligent people and perhaps even starfarers? Could they be helped? Or was it the other way around? Was this the birthright of the Eynastyoi – to see the great and complex cosmos and cast off the curse of self-awareness? Some saw it that way and argued that the people of Osktyask 2 must be left alone.

There was a third point of view, self-serving and sinister. The Evolvers knew that the people of Osktyask 2 had been Droyne and regressed to chirpers. What would the effects of reintroducing the casteing rituals be? Could they find some insight that would allow them to

caste but retain their physical and mental advantages? Unknown to the rest of Eynastyoi society, a covert research project was set up on Osktyask 2.

The researchers set up in one of the abandoned cities, making themselves comfortable for a long stay. They took over some large buildings and converted them as living spaces, ritual chambers and holding areas for captives. After securing the immediate area they began kidnapping local Chirpers for experimentation. Some of the experiments were psychological, some physical, and none were carried out with any regard to the well-being of the subjects. The most sinister involved variations on the casteing rituals the Evolvers had learned from other Droyne. Some of these experiments resulted in bizarre effects that might be considered mutations but most simply caused distress to the Chirper subjects with no effects. A few did produce casted Droyne but these tended to suffer from even worse ageing effects than the Eynastyoi normally did.

There was one exception, a young Eynastyoi who was put through an altered casteing process. Others that underwent an apparently identical ritual died or emerged malformed but the subject now known as Dyuskelkss was apparently exactly what the project had intended. He emerged from the casteing ritual retaining the impressive physical characteristics of the Eynastyoi but with the increased intellect and other attributes of a casted Droyne leader-of-leaders. Repeats of the experiment resulted in more horrific failures and in the years since this single success Dyuskelkss has emerged as a leader among the Evolvers as well as an object of veneration for some of them.

Some of the malformed pseudo-Droyne created by the Evolvers' casteing rituals died quickly but most survived. After eliminating some batches, the Evolvers began driving them off to see what would happen to them over time. None were taken in by local Chirper communities, although whether this was out of fear of the Evolvers or the pseudo-Droyne themselves is unknown. The pseudo-Droyne established small groups in the city and its surroundings and began foraging much as their Chirper cousins do. Characteristics began to emerge among different groups. Most were unintelligent but signs were noted here and there of Droyne-style organisation in some groups. These were watched with interest and individuals sometimes recaptured for study.

Six years ago, an exploration ship from the mainstream Eynastyoi arrived on Osktyask 2. The crew detected faint power signatures from the city and landed to investigate. The Evolvers there greeted the newcomers with apparent joy, spinning a tale of how they were a scientific



expedition marooned when their support vessel failed to return. This was partially true, although the support vessel has made occasional visits and is due in another year or two. The explorers were taken in and only discovered the true nature of the enclave on Osktyask 2 when it was far too late. Those not captured immediately were able to escape into the surrounding city but were locked out of their own ship by the Evolvers. The ship remains powered down but is maintained, in case the Evolvers have need of it, and most of the crew have been hunted down and killed over the past few years.

The current situation is much as before; the Evolvers continue their experiments on the local Chirper population and the feral pseudo-Droyne. They feel the misery they have inflicted and the endless variations of failure are outweighed by the single success represented by Dyuskelkss. Indeed, he is becoming something of a messiah figure, who will lead the Evolvers into a new age of greatness. This is causing some friction among the leaders of the expedition, who are becoming very long in the tooth by their species' standards and want more to show for their life's work than a single upstart developing delusions of grandeur.

Dyuskelkss

Dyuskelkss is the first, last and only one of his kind. In that, he has much in common with Yaskoydray, which would please him if he ever heard the legends of the Ancients. However, although he is very smart, Dyuskelkss is no super-genius. Indeed, he is intelligent in a flawed and twisted way, with blind spots towards some subjects. He is also a psychopath. Dyuskelkss inherited a callous willingness to experiment on living people from his

Evolver parents but the casteing process produced an individual who likes to 'test' those he considers lesser beings. That definition applies to almost everyone.

Dyuskelkss is smart enough not to act directly against anyone who might successfully oppose him and to conceal his actions from the others. He will occasionally lead members of his own Evolver faction into lethal situations just to watch them struggle and die, and has taken to manipulating the pseudo-Droyne into doing what he wants. At least some of the reports of organisation among the pseudo-Droyne are actually Dyuskelkss persuading them to do his bidding to various ends. Ultimately, he plans to eliminate all Evolvers who will not follow him fervently enough and return to his homeworld as what amounts to a messianic conqueror. For now, he continues to push for ever more extreme experiments in the hope of creating a better class of follower for himself. He is increasingly impatient at the lack of favourable results encountered thus far and has begun to believe the other Evolvers are holding back deliberately.

Dyuskelkss is the architect of many of the troubles the Travellers will encounter on this world but will present himself as a friendly emissary from the research team. He is sufficiently confident of his own abilities (or just plain insane enough) that he will precipitate an incident with himself at the centre of it. For example, he might manipulate a group of pseudo-Droyne into setting up an ambush then walk into it with the Travellers. This might allay suspicion and will allow him to observe the Travellers' reactions first hand. Another favoured gambit of his is to offer medical assistance then make it obvious to the victim that he is not really helping them. Their struggles to alert companions or save themselves are amusing to this twisted individual.

DYUSKELKSS: CASTED EVOLVER

SPECIES			GENDER	AGE
Droyne			Male	—
TRAITS			—	SKILLS
STR	9	INT	14	Athletics (dexterity) 1, Awareness 1, Clairvoyance 1, Deception 3, Diplomat 2, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Leadership 5, Medic 1, Melee (blade) 1, Science (Droyne ritual pseudoscience) 3, Science (genetics) 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2
DEX	10	EDU	11	
END	7	SOC	11	
PSI	8			
EQUIPMENT			Weapons: Blade (2D), Tranq Gun (special), Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3) Armour: Field Research Harness (+3)	



BACKGROUND

It is difficult to correlate SOC to human standards. Dyuskelkss is a well-respected senior leader among the expedition and would be accepted as such upon his return to their homeworld. However, he and a few others see him as far more than that, a messianic figure with a SOC too high to be measured. Dyuskelkss himself is something of a megalomaniac and will eventually come to regard himself as the only person in the whole cosmos who matters.

Psionics

Dyuskelkss is not powerfully psionic but has some talents that can be useful to him. He is creative and vindictive in his application of these talents but has never been formally trained. Indeed, none of the other Evolvers are psionic and Dyuskelkss has concealed the abilities he developed after casteing. This gives him capabilities that his fellows do not even suspect are possible.

Dyuskelkss has the passive ability to make people lose track of him. A Traveller who knows there is someone or something nearby can make a Difficult (10+) Recon or INT check to focus for a few moments. The Traveller will be able to see Dyuskelkss for 1D rounds for every point of Effect or one round if the Effect is zero. This only works on living minds, so cameras and other equipment will see him and a recording can be viewed to prove he was present. Maximum range is Very Long.

EVOLVER EQUIPMENT

The tranquiliser guns used by the Evolvers are geared to Droyne/Chirper metabolism. Against such targets they deliver a fast-acting drug that causes 2D damage to END alone within 1D rounds of a hit. The dart will penetrate one point of armour but no more and does no damage except to deliver the drug. A non-Droyne hit by one suffers no effect except annoyance on a roll of 1–2 on 1D. On 3–4 they suffer an unpleasant burning sensation followed by disorientation for 2D minutes. On 5–6 the drug acts as it would against a Droyne.

The field research harness is a combination of light body armour and a place to stow all manner of equipment. It is soft and flexible but extremely hard to tear. Most users tailor the carrying loops and attachment points to their own preference but an Evolver out in the field will almost always have a knife, some rope or cord, water and rations, a light source and an assortment of small tools.

ALLIES AND OPPOSITION

The Travellers may not be clear who the enemy is during most of this adventure and indeed the answer to that question may depend on their actions. The Referee should keep in mind that at first glance, particularly in poor light or at a distance, it can be hard to distinguish a Chirper from a Droyne or pseudo-Droyne. Eynastyoi are larger but if there is no frame of reference the general similarity can fool the eye. There is a real possibility for accidental clashes or hesitation as a fight develops as a result and Dyuskelkss will use this to create incidents for his amusement or to confound the Travellers.

CHIRPER HUNTER OR VILLAGER

The typical chirper encountered by the Travellers is a little above the threshold of sentience. They have a language, which is not related to Oynprith, and can communicate with the Travellers once it is translated. The Chirpers cannot understand advanced concepts but do know that when the Evolvers take people away they are rarely seen again. Those who escape are often deformed and die very soon. The Chirpers feel no kinship with Droyne or Eynastyoi and may not be able to understand they are related.

STR 4 DEX 7 END 5 INT 2 EDU 0 SOC 4 PSI 4

Skills: Athletics 0, Melee 0, Profession (hunter-gatherer) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2
Weapons: Small Spear (2D)

Psionics

Invisibility 1: Chirpers have the natural ability to make people lose track of them or to escape notice. A Traveller who knows there is someone or something nearby can make a Difficult (10+) Recon or INT check to focus for a few moments. The Traveller will be able to see any mind-clouding Chirpers for 1D rounds for every point of Effect, or one round if the Effect is zero.. Maximum range is Very Long.

FERAL PSEUDO-DROYNE

The pseudo-Droyne vary considerably one to another. They are primitive and, on average, less intelligent than the Chirpers. They are cunning and vicious, however.

STR 6 DEX 8 END 6 INT 1 EDU 0 SOC 0

Skills: Athletics 0, Melee (bludgeon) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1
Weapons: Stone Club (1D+4), Bone Knife (1D+2) or similar

EYNASTYOI EXPLORER

The surviving members of the exploration crew have survived in the city and its surroundings by living off the land. Their starfaring skills can be assigned by the Referee as needed; those presented here represent what they have learned in their time on-planet. If a survivor has a firearm they are unlikely to have more than a handful of rounds left for it and will be very reluctant to use those.

STR 9 DEX 10 END 8 INT 8 EDU 11 SOC 8

Skills: Athletics 0, Gun Combat 0, Melee 0, 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1
Weapons: Knife (1D+2), possible Autopistol (3D-3) or Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3)

EYNASTYOI EVOLVER

The Evolvers are well equipped and generally in better health than the surviving explorers. They know the parts of the city around their base quite well, including likely danger points, and are adept at capturing groups of feral pseudo-Droyne by ambushing them or chasing them into a trap.

STR 10 DEX 11 END 10 INT 8 EDU 11 SOC 8

Skills: Athletics 0, Deception 0, Gun Combat (slug) 1, Investigate 1, Melee 0, 1, Recon 2, Science (Evolver science-ritual beliefs), Stealth 1, Survival 1
Weapons: Blade (2D), Tranq Gun (special), Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3)
Armour: Field Research Harness (+3)

INVESTIGATION

VESSEL *ORY-ASLKIY*

The Eynastyoi favour multirole 'investigation vessels' to specialised laboratory or exploration ships. The vessel *Ory-Aslkiy* is typical of the type. Hull form is reminiscent of a Dual Alliance ship but with some significant differences. Where the Dual Alliance favours a cylinder-and-spheres layout, the Eynastyoi typically build their ships as a flattened central sphere with ovoid or flattened-sphere sub-units.

The *Ory-Aslkiy* class is a 'belly-lander' type, designed to rest on its lower structure and four ovoid projections. Each of the five hull sections has a full set of landing gear to spread out the weight of the craft. The four 400-ton sub-hulls are independent and can break away from the main craft at need, although this makes landing the main craft a tricky business if more than one is detached.

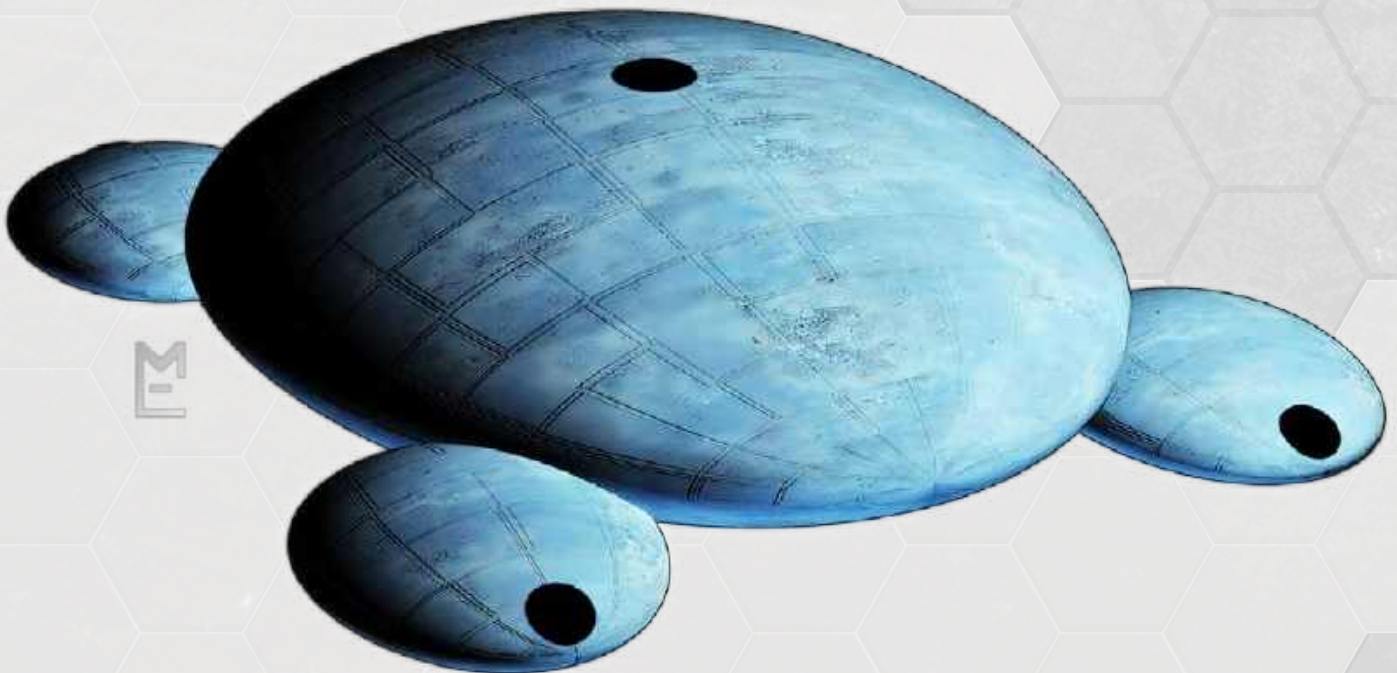
Each of the four detachable sections contains a laboratory and additional working space, plus a 40-ton biosphere area and a conference room for discussion of experimental results. The command area contains a small bridge, power plant and manoeuvre drive sufficient to operate the craft. Accommodation is provided for six personnel and a leader, who has a high-quality cabin. The remaining space is given over to cargo area, which is often used to stow vehicles, experimental equipment and samples as well as the more common stores and supplies.

The main hull is laid out with the power plant, jump drives and primary manoeuvre drive aft and a large cargo bay/vehicle hangar forward. This is served by a dual cargo crane arrangement, with movable partitions

to allow one side of the cargo bay to be used as a garage whilst the other stows supplies. Aft of the cargo area is the accommodation/control section. This contains the bridge, medical facilities and a large laboratory area, plus a considerable amount of configurable working space. The deck above houses the majority of the crew and command staff.

The *Ory-Aslkiy* class is lightly armed and rarely carries dedicated gunners. Most of the crew are technicians and engineers, who run the ship's systems and support the scientific staff. The modular construction of the vessel allows each detachable section to work on something different in isolation or multiple versions of the same project to be run in parallel without interfering with one another. In an extreme situation a compromised section can be jettisoned, although more commonly the breakaway capability is used to allow a pod to act as a detached base for ground operations.

The main laboratory, in the central hull, is very capable and surrounded by configurable work areas. These are immediately adjacent to the bridge, allowing the ship commander to oversee the research work going on. Access between the two is by way of a sensor/data processing chamber with eight configurable workstations. It is not uncommon for parts of the cargo bay to be converted to additional research areas, sometimes requiring extensive work. Occasionally a vessel is encountered with the whole cargo area converted to small craft hangars. Such ships are typically used to conduct detailed surveys of an entire star system, with a particular interest in locating debris or derelict starships that can be studied to advance the technology of the Eynastyoi.



INVESTIGATION VESSEL

[ORY-ASLKIY CLASS]

TL9		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	4,000 tons, Sphere	—	160
	Breakaway Hull, 400 ton sections x4	80	160
M-Drive	Thrust 1	40	80
Jump Drive	Jump-1	100	150
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power: 2,400	240	120
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 12 weeks of operation	896	—
Bridge		60	20
	Small Bridges (400t craft) x4	40	8
Computer	Core/40	—	45
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
	Sensor Stations x8	8	4
	Mineral Detection Suite	—	5
Weapons	Dual Turrets (pulse laser) x8	8	20
Systems	Fuel Processor (800 tons/day)	40	2
	Cargo Cranes (Capacity 150 tons) x4	6	6
	Cargo Cranes (Capacity 450 tons) x2	8	8
	Probe Drones x100	20	10
	Grappling Arms x4	8	4
	Biospheres (40 tons) x4	160	32
	Briefing (conference) Rooms x4	16	2
	Laboratories (4 personnel) x4	64	16
	Laboratory (8 personnel)	32	8
	Library	4	4
	Medical Bays x3	12	6
Staterooms	High x8	48	6.4
	Standard x50	200	25
Common Area	Working Space	400	40
	Living Space	200	20
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
Cargo		1,309	—
TOTAL: MCr 964.5			

INVESTIGATION VESSEL

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS
X11, MAINTENANCE
X 4, GUNNERS X8,
ADMINISTRATORS X2,
OFFICERS X2, ADDITIONAL
MISSION-SPECIFIC
PERSONNEL

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr80375/month
.....

PURCHASE COST
MCr964.5

POWER REQUIREMENTS

400

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

800

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

400

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

72

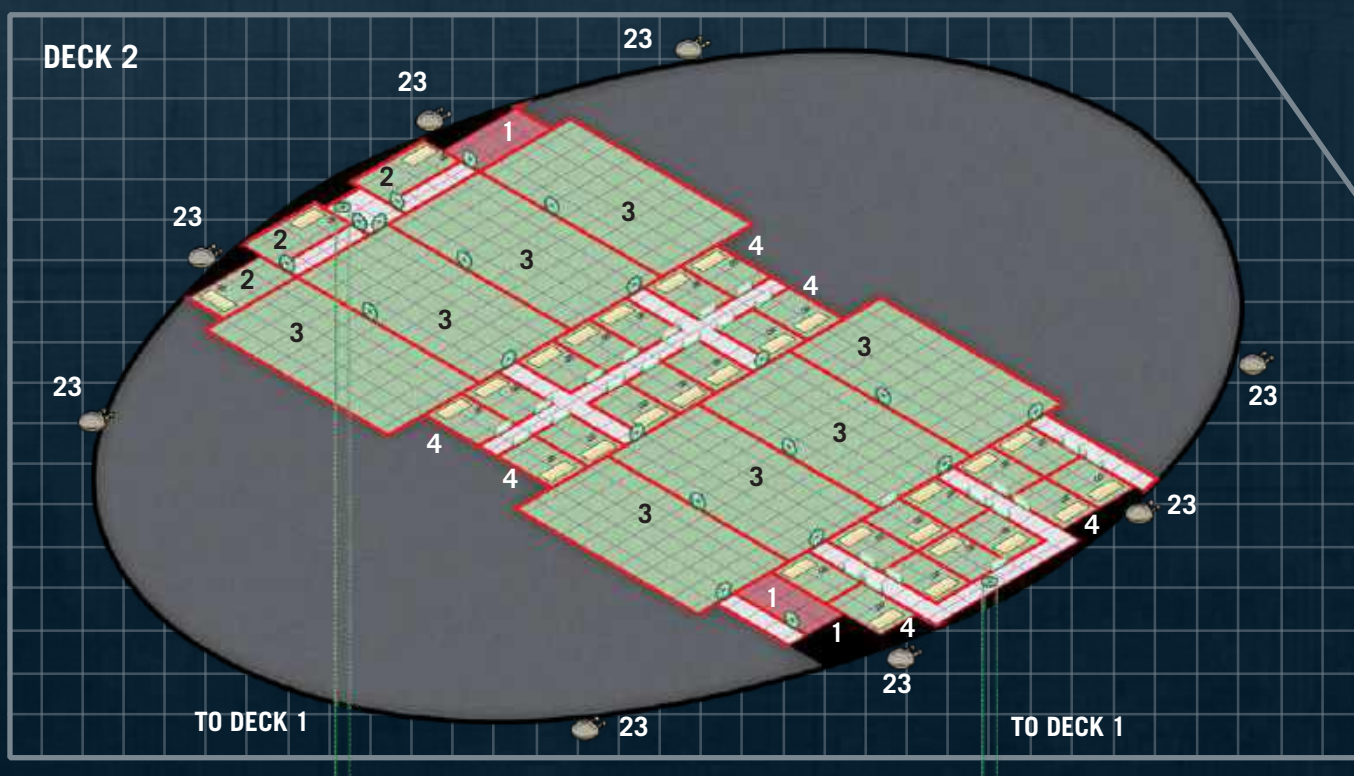
WEAPONS

40

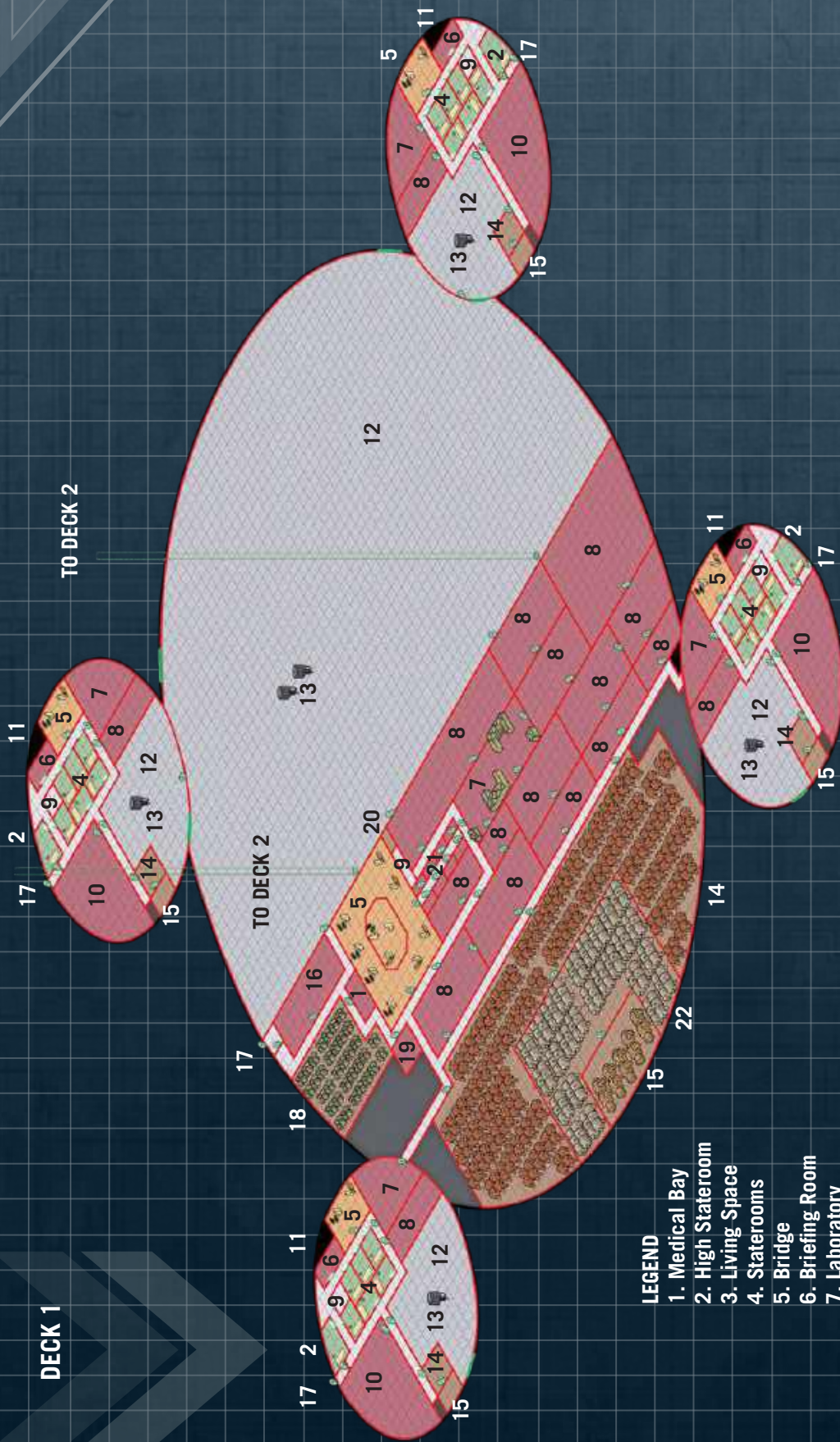
FUEL PROCESSOR

1,600

HULL POINTS



DECK 1



LEGEND

1. Medical Bay
2. High Stateroom
3. Living Space
4. Staterooms
5. Bridge
6. Briefing Room
7. Laboratory
8. Working Space
9. Fresher
10. Biosphere
11. Grappling Arm
12. Cargo Hold
13. Cargo Crane
14. Power Plant
15. Manoeuvre Drive
16. Probe Drones
17. Air Lock
18. Fuel Processor
19. Library
20. Sensors
21. Sensor Stations
22. Jump Drive
23. Dual Turret

APPROACH AND LANDING

As the Travellers approach they will note a few details about the ruined city. It is by a wide margin the best-preserved of the cities that once stood here. Most others are little more than buried foundations, visible as variations in the overlying vegetation, but this one retains some upright walls. There is much that can be deduced from this first impression.

The city layout is uneven and inefficient, suggesting a community that grew up over many years rather than being built to a plan. Sensor readings suggest materials typically used in early industrial communities, which fits the pattern. The logical, and in this case correct, deduction is that a TL4–5 civilisation developed on this world and eventually collapsed. Some areas appear to have retained their technological base longer than others and there are no signs of major conflict.

All this points to a natural regression caused by some major failure. The usual causes of such a collapse are catastrophic depopulation by disease, rapid environmental change or a resource crisis. A civilisation that runs out of energy sources it relies upon and cannot make the transition to others in time will inevitably shrink. Indications are that this is what happened here, with a few regions surviving well after the others had sunk back to a primitive level. This may well have been the last civilised city on Osktyask 2.

The city looks to be long abandoned, with few structures remaining above three metres in height and significant regrowth of vegetation. Paved areas are cracked, with bushes and even trees growing through them and most vertical surfaces are covered with climbing plants. Anywhere that was open, such as parks, is now a miniature wilderness. Animals, mostly of a small and harmless kind, roam freely throughout the ruins and the Travellers might even spot large forest-dwelling herbivores that seem quite at home.

The expedition that landed their ship in the ruins were not subtle about it, which might raise a few questions. In fact they landed outside the city and their vessel was moved after they were eliminated by the Evolvers but the Travellers have no way to know this. A city landing is always destructive; it is certain the explorers' ship will have smashed a few walls or crushed structures as it settled. This indicates a lack of regard for the vessel as well as the city but is doable with a vessel of this size. A large ship that put a landing foot through into a

basement might be able to balance on its many others but a small craft would almost certainly suffer damage and could end up wedged.

The Travellers may be able to land in the ruins of the city but this would be risky. A much safer option would be to set down in the countryside nearby and approach on foot. This has the additional advantage of security – a grounded vessel in the city will have multiple concealed avenues of approach whereas one in open country should be able to detect anyone approaching. This is complicated if the targets are Chirpers, however, as will become clear.

Once down the Travellers will likely conduct the usual security checks and basic sampling in the immediate area around their ship but the ruins and the vessel parked in them will draw their attention as soon as they are able. For their part, the Evolvers will be aware of the Travellers' arrival. Although their captured ship is not manned, they have a sensor and alert feed. The Evolvers will not do anything immediately, preferring to observe the newcomers through their network of sensors. Thus the Travellers will have a little time to explore before contact is made. The episodes below might happen in any order, however, and must be modified by the Referee to accommodate earlier incidents.

Seeing Chirpers

The Referee should note that the Chirpers' natural psionic invisibility operates on a passive basis. Anyone in a ship or close to it will be subject to the normal interference of the Chirpers but this will be challenged by proximity alarms if they are rigged.

One side effect of this situation is that whilst the Travellers are above 500 metres in altitude they will be out of range of the psionic invisibility effect and will see any bands of Chirpers in the area, likely fleeing in panic. Once the Travellers get within range of the effect they may temporarily forget about what they just saw and will be unable to see the Chirpers even by way of cameras and remote feeds. If there are no Chirpers close enough to cause this effect the Travellers will suddenly remember the Chirpers they saw and may wonder why they lost interest. Psionic Travellers with a mental shield, or those using artificial protection, will be able to see the Chirpers but even pointing them out may not be sufficient to make others aware of them. What matters here is the proximity of a Chirper to the mind trying to observe it. A Chirper within 500 metres of someone can cloud their mind. Someone 750 metres away viewing the Chirper through a camera right next to it can see it normally.

EXPLORING THE CITY

The ruins are a place for tension and wariness, since the Travellers do not know what lies within but may suspect danger. The Referee should remember that the ruins are shady, with patches of sunlight. Movement is common – tree branches in the breeze casting ever-changing shadows, small animals or birds suddenly darting away. The Travellers will get the impression they are being watched, which is correct. There may be feral pseudo-Droyne, Evolvers or explorer surveyors nearby and Chirper hunting parties sometimes enter the ruins despite the danger. Chirpers have the ability to be more or less invisible to most people but this does not work all the time. The Travellers may occasionally get the impression that ‘someone was just there, in front of us’ but be entirely unable to find them.

Moving through the ruins is hard work. They offer the combination of urban and forest hazards – rubble to turn an ankle, thick undergrowth and unstable sections of wall. In places it is possible to get into a second or even higher storey and move above the tangled ground-level environment but there is always the danger of finding a weak area and triggering a collapse.

Early in their journey through the forest the Travellers will come to the attention of Stermbroyts, a survivor of the Eynastyoi explorer crew. The Referee should use the entry for an explorer survivor for Stermbroyts, assigning additional skills to suit her position on the mission. She will not reveal herself but will try to observe the Travellers from a distance. The first encounter occurs when the Travellers spot Stermbroyts. They get a fleeting glimpse of a large, Droyne-like person in ragged clothes ducking out of sight and making off across the ruins at speed. If the Travellers follow this will draw them into one or more of the encounters below.

Sensor Post

The Travellers become aware of something incongruous nearby; perhaps a booby trap or other threat. Inspection reveals it is a sensor post containing acoustic, seismic and various forms of visual sensors including thermal and low-light cameras. The technology appears to be around TL9–10, with an internal battery pack good for several weeks. There are no wire connections going anywhere, so the post must be part of a wireless sensor network.

The post can be hacked easily enough with high-tech equipment but the Travellers will need to figure out the communications protocols in use. This requires a Routine (6+) Electronics (sensors) check. Success allows the Travellers to receive data from this post and Effect 2+

allows them to remotely access several others emplaced throughout the ruins. Effect 6+ allows access to the whole network, including databases of raw sensor data.

This information could be used in creative ways. Once the Travellers become aware of Dyuskelkss they may be able to use the sensor data to confirm he was in certain places, possibly exposing his claims to the contrary as lies. Careful analysis will eventually reveal the existence of survivors hiding in the ruins, raising questions about why they are there. Expeditions to capture Chirpers and chase pseudo-Droyne into the city will also become apparent. It will take the expedition’s intelligence team several days to figure out what is going on from the raw data but warnings of strange goings-on will come sooner.

Booby Trap

The Travellers may run into a booby trap before or after the sensor post. There are many such traps set around the ruins. Some are used to trap food and not very dangerous to humans but others are rather nasty. The surviving explorers use them to deter the Evolvers, whilst Dyuskelkss sometimes lays traps just for the fun of watching someone stumble into one. He has also used this method to eliminate a rival and make it look like the survivors are responsible.

There are several types of trap the Travellers may run into. Typically, spotting one in time requires an Average (8+) Recon check.

Trip Hazard: These look like they are intended to catch small game somehow but their real purpose is to slow a pursuit or perhaps injure someone so they end up helpless in the middle of the ruins. The usual form is a strong vine tied across a path or gap between foliage. Dyuskelkss sets this sort of trap so he can ‘rescue’ the victim or watch them suffer, depending on his mood. Survivors use them to slow pursuit. A Traveller who encounters a trip hazard must make require an Average (8+) Athletics (dexterity) check to avoid falling. This may result in a secondary hazard depending on speed and what the Traveller lands on but the Traveller suffers a minimum of one point of damage per negative Effect.

Punji Stake: A small covered pit with a sharp stake at the bottom, intended to injure a foot, can be placed almost anywhere. A punji stake does 1D damage, with good boots counting for Protection +3. If the target takes any damage to the foot their movement rate will be halved until either the wound has healed or the Traveller is heavily dosed with pain medication.

Deadfall: Most deadfalls make use of unstable building walls or objects placed where they can fall from a tree or other high place. It is possible to dive out of the way of a deadfall by making a Difficult (10+) Athletics (dexterity) check. Damage is normally 2D but can be more if the trap is very elaborate. Dyuskelss will sometimes set up an obvious deadfall to make the victim step into a different trap or dive onto spikes when they spot it start to move.

Ambush or Encounter

The feral pseudo-Droyne of the ruins are tragic creatures, created by failed casteing rituals. They are fearful and angry, resulting in a desire to kill anyone venturing into their territory. Pseudo-Droyne can be mistaken for normal Droyne or Chirpers upon a fleeting glance but are obviously 'wrong' if anyone gets a clear look at them. They do not have the Chirpers' natural psionic invisibility but are adept at moving stealthily through the ruins.

If they get the chance, pseudo-Droyne will ambush the Travellers from concealment. Their weapons are thrown spears and rocks, which may not be very effective. However, they are hard to spot and hit, and may have laid traps or set up an escape route through a dangerous area of the ruins. Ideally, they want to separate the Travellers and cause some of them to become injured by running through treacherous rubble. These can then be picked off at leisure. The pseudo-Droyne will not always hunt down all members of a party; they may draw some off and leave them lost in the ruins whilst they concentrate on the others, then disappear leaving behind the bodies.

If an ambush is not possible, the pseudo-Droyne will still try to conceal themselves and strike from cover. They prefer a sneak attack from behind and will patiently creep close in order to make one but are willing to fight head-on if the odds are not too bad. An encounter with a hunting party might result in the pseudo-Droyne simply scattering into the undergrowth but they will watch and seek an opportunity. Anyone in the ruins is a threat as far as they are concerned, to be avoided or hunted down and killed.

THE EVOLVERS AND THEIR BASE

Sooner or later the Travellers will encounter the Evolvers. They do not call themselves that of course; they are simply 'an exploration team from Eynastyusk', which is more or less true. The Evolvers are a devious lot and Dyuskelss is the worst of them all. He may make solo

contact with the Travellers or join a group sent out to meet them. Alternatively, he might prefer to observe from a distance but however it happens he will be aware of what is said and done at the first meeting.

The Evolvers will try to engineer a situation in which their first contact is as favourable as possible. If the Travellers are battling pseudo-Droyne or injured by traps the Evolvers will approach and offer help. If Dyuskelss has helped things along, perhaps by riling up the pseudo-Droyne to attack the Travellers, the Evolvers may genuinely not know this has happened; they will think they just got lucky and made a good impression helping newcomers out of a jam.

The Evolvers have deceived other starfarers before and those were of their own kind and thus knew their sect existed. The Travellers have no reason to suspect the Evolvers are anything but an exploration team, although they may realise the methods in use are questionable. The Evolvers will approach the Travellers warily, which is hardly surprising in a ruined city filled with traps and potential ambushes and happily invite them back to their base. If the Travellers say they have something else to do the Evolvers will not obstruct them. They might try to dissuade the Travellers from going to the landed ship but will not make much of an effort in case this looks suspicious.

If the Travellers do visit the Evolvers' camp they will find their hosts have gone to a fair amount of trouble to make the most intact part of the city habitable without wrecking it. Their structures are built within or alongside existing walls, which has helped to preserve the remains of the city. This is at odds with landing an exploration ship in the city but the usual response to questions is 'that was not a good decision' followed by changing the subject.

The Evolvers' base is mostly built of typical prefabricated sections, not very different to the systems used in Charted Space. Holding areas for captives are not exactly concealed but located a little away from the main base, which is surrounded by a wire fence and sensor posts. Between the two lies a circular building that has been internally rebuilt. The roof was shored up with girders and timbers, without any real attempt to make it look good. As a result this structure does not attract attention from the air.

Internally, the building is more interesting. It has a concentric outer and inner wall, with six circular chambers between the two walls and slightly elevated walkways leading to a central dais. Entry to the building is through one of the circular chambers, with the others simply waiting areas. This is a Droyne casteing chamber,

or rather it was. It has been modified in ways that might seem disturbing; there are attachment points for chains around the dais, as if those undergoing the casteing ritual were held against their will. Stains on the dais and floor are reminiscent of blood – and will test positive for Droyne/Chirper DNA if anyone is able to get a sample. The carvings on the arched roof remain partially intact. Sensitives will get an impression of generations of Droyne solemnly undergoing their casteing and emerging joyful to begin their new role as adults and contributors to society. This is sharply at odds with evidence that Chirpers have been casteed by force.

At the centre of the dais is a plinth. Laid on it are items recognisable to anyone who knows about Droyne casteing; sceptres of office, robes and ceremonial items. There are also several sets of chains and two very ordinary handguns. These have taken dozens of lives, when what emerged from the casteing was deemed too dangerous to chase off and study using the emplaced sensors throughout the ruin.

If the Evolvers are challenged about this, they are evasive at first but admit they undertook some experiments into casteing the local Chirper population in the hope of ending their own race's curse of short life. The experiments were 'not a good decision' as the Evolvers like to put it. They will claim they curtailed the project and those responsible were removed from command positions. Stories differ if individuals are pressed for details, however, and the presence of several Chirpers in the holding pens behind the ritual chamber suggests an ongoing experiment.

THE SHIP

The explorers' ship was taken in a surprise attack whilst a minimal crew was aboard. Some were out on field expeditions, some were visiting the Evolvers and were captured without difficulty. As a result the Evolvers have the access codes to the ship and there is virtually no external damage. The ship is locked up tight and the Evolvers will not give outsiders access. This is perfectly reasonable – the Travellers would not allow outsiders free access to their own ships – and should not arouse suspicion. However, the Travellers may decide otherwise and attempt to get into the ship.

This is not all that difficult with the resources of *Deepnight Revelation*. Most of the security systems are electronic and the difference in Tech Levels means that once communications protocols are figured out cracking the codes is a matter of minutes even for a handcomp. The Evolvers have no idea what the Travellers' equipment is capable of and naturally think their ship

is secure, so even if the Travellers show an interest they will only be spotted breaking in by chance or if they blatantly make the attempt in front of witnesses.

The ship is in a powered-down state with only maintenance and emergency systems online but once access is granted it is a simple matter of bringing minor systems back online. Powering up the main reactor will alert the Evolvers but otherwise they are unlikely to notice anything is happening. They have a systems log feed to a computer in their base but it is not monitored on a regular basis, so the Travellers can explore the ship and download its logs. Once translated, these are found to record a routine but sometimes interesting exploration mission and the eventual detection of a faint power source in the ruined city.

The logs indicate that the crew landed outside the city and began exploring. They note the presence of Chirpers and apparent signs of offworlders in the ruins. After an entry indicating the expedition had made contact with 'other explorer' the logs end abruptly. Thereafter there is no detailed record, just raw data from the ship's systems. If analysed this shows the security systems were disabled for a period of three hours, then the ship was moved a short distance. After two more days of full-power operation the ship was put into a waiting state and has not been activated since. Up to the point where the logs end there is tracking data on some of the crew, mainly logins and periods of watchstanding or use of facilities like the labs. After the break in the logs there is only one login by a crewmember or rather an attempted one. Someone named Stermbroyts attempted to gain access to the ship with a formerly-valid ID and was refused entry by the automated security systems. There have been no attempts since.

DISPUTING BIRTHRIGHT

Once the Travellers have encountered the Evolvers, both groups will naturally want to learn about one another. The Evolvers were entirely unaware of a ship in orbit as they do not trouble themselves to monitor the sensor feeds from 'their' vessel. The Evolvers will assume the Travellers are from one of the local powers and know of the existence of the Evolver movement. They will be concerned about what might happen if their experiments are discovered and will try to keep the Travellers away from the ritual chamber if they can.

Ironically, the most plausible explanation for the Evolvers' presence on Osktyask 2 is too close to the truth to use. If the Travellers do not know about the



Evolver movement they are not likely to reach the conclusion the pseudo-Droyne are the result of Evolver experiments but anyone who did know the Evolvers existed would be likely to see the connection. Thus, whilst the Evolvers could simply claim they are on Osktyask 2 to figure out why some Chirpers turn into pseudo-Droyne they will not risk using that cover story. Indeed, if the Travellers do not ask about the pseudo-Droyne the Evolvers will not mention them in the hope the Travellers will move on and the whole problem will go away. Failing to mention something like the pseudo-Droyne will no doubt seem suspicious to the Travellers, perhaps leading them to investigate further.

The cover story the Evolvers choose is hasty but reasonably plausible. They will state they discovered evidence of a collapsed Droyne civilisation on Osktyask 2, along with large numbers of Chirpers. Old records make reference to a relationship between the Chirpers and the Droyne, which intrigued them. The mission was sent to study the best-preserved of the Droyne cities and determine what happened to the civilisation that built it. The Evolvers have figured out that the Droyne of Osktyask 2 had a society based upon fossil fuels, which were already depleted due to earlier civilisations. The

working theory is that an energy crisis threw the people of Osktyask 2 back to a primitive level but the search for proof and details is ongoing.

EXPEDITION INTO THE RUINS

Once the Travellers and the Evolvers have established a working relationship, the Evolvers will offer to show them some of the things they have found in the city. This is a gambit to get them away from the camp so that captive Chirpers can be driven off and the ritual chamber sanitised. The Evolvers have explored the city in their time on-planet and have come up with a set of points of interest they can show the Travellers. The Evolvers have no grav vehicles and their off-road trucks are not suited to the uneven ground and rubble of the city. If the Travellers offer to provide transport the Evolvers will accept but it will be necessary to set down very carefully. Any suitable landing spot is likely to be at least a few tens of metres away from the goal, so some progress on foot will still be necessary.

The Travellers are warned that moving through the city can be dangerous – as if they did not already know that – and to be on their guard. The Evolvers accompanying them include Dyuskelkss, who acts as a spokesman for the group. The Travellers will be led on a lengthy and tiring tour of the city, with some real points of interest along the way. These include:

- The remains of a freight terminal once served by a broad highway leading to other cities. Dyuskelkss points out that the thin atmosphere would have made air travel difficult before the invention of grav vehicles, which may have limited the thinking of the locals in some ways.
- A ruined administrative complex near the centre of the city. Parts are reasonably intact and Dyuskelkss says the expedition has been planning to properly investigate it for some time. Its location, far from the Evolvers' camp, has made that difficult. If the Travellers have grav vehicles available, they could probably conduct an exploration long before Dyuskelkss and his people get around to it.
- A ritual chamber like the one at the camp, surrounded by collapsed structures. It is badly damaged but has withstood the test of time much better than nearby buildings. Dyuskelkss tries to start a discussion about why this might be.
- A rather primitive nuclear power station. There is little dangerous radiation, although some parts of the plant have exposed low-grade material that could be harmful. If the Travellers know about the pseudo-Droyne Dyuskelkss says his people thought this might be the cause of their mutation but despite the fact that a small surrounding area has some slight contamination it does not appear this is the cause.
- Several clusters of intact buildings, mostly dwellings. Dyuskelkss spins a tale about wanting to survey all the remaining structures to compare size and location. Little is known about the society of the collapsed civilisation and according to Dyuskelkss his people want to draw correlations between dwelling size and surroundings. The social scientists can make deductions from that, Dyuskelkss says.

Dyuskelkss is trying to interest the Travellers in these areas, which are nowhere near the Evolvers' base, whilst creating a plausible cover for their activities. At the same time he hopes to put the Travellers or their crewmates in danger and perhaps eliminate a few of them. Dyuskelkss has no idea how many people the Travellers can field, nor how powerful their ship is, and believes he can weaken the Travellers' crew enough to permit a repeat of what happened to the previous expedition.

Dyuskelkss has not warned his fellow Evolvers of what is about to happen. This is, in part, so that their reactions will be genuine and also to conceal the fact that he has done something similar to his own people. At some point in the expedition he will use his invisibility along with more conventional stealthy movement to slip away whilst everyone is distracted. He will do this at a time when there are pseudo-Droyne in the area. He may be able to lure them into an encounter with the Travellers or pelt a rock at someone from concealment and try to get them to search for the assailant, hopefully causing them to fall into an ambush.

One way or another, the Travellers will encounter hostile pseudo-Droyne. They know the ruins well and will try to draw the Travellers onto natural hazards and traps such as a collapsed basement lightly covered by debris. The usual mode of combat is to throw rocks then flee, drawing some of their targets into a pursuit. Once scattered, the Travellers will be ambushed by multiple pseudo-Droyne. Dyuskelkss will reappear at some point in the fight, probably rushing out from behind some obstruction pursued by a group of pseudo-Droyne. He has occasionally used this gambit to murder one of his colleagues by pretending to be in trouble and then vanishing once the mob turns on the would-be rescuer. He may try this here but is more concerned with making it look like he was just another victim of the attack.

The Travellers will definitely know about the pseudo-Droyne after this incident but the Evolvers act like they have little information. All they will say is that they have had run-ins with this sort of creature before and think they are a mutant form of the Chirpers that inhabit the rest of the planet. They claim to have been worried about radiation and other mutagens but have not detected anything dangerous.

BACK AT BASE

By the time the expedition returns from the ruins the Evolvers will have sanitised their base as best they can. If the Travellers left anyone there this will be more of a problem but they will still try to get rid of the penned Chirpers. Ironically, this makes it more likely the Travellers will discover the pens. Whilst the Chirpers were in the pens their natural psionic invisibility was likely to cause the Travellers to take no notice of the whole area. Now they are gone the Travellers are not impeded. Some of them may wonder why they failed to notice a set of pens. This may lead to questions but the Evolvers have a ready and almost true answer – they were used to hold examples of the local wildlife and 'those mutant things that live in the ruins'.

The Evolvers have not managed to conceal all traces of their activities, especially if the Travellers left someone at their base. There are signs the pens were used recently and a rubbish pile around the back that contains items not used by animals or pseudo-Droyne. These include carrying straps and bags, well-made stone tools unlike anything the pseudo-Droyne have been seen with and quite a few sets of Chirper bones. This can be passed off by the Evolvers as 'the local population attacked us a couple of times' but the lie is wearing very thin by this time.

Travellers who go off by themselves or in a very small group run the risk of being the first victims of an attempt to eliminate them. There is also a chance that Stermbroyts will take the enormous risk of trying to contact them. She is filthy, dressed in rags and might be mistaken for a pseudo-Droyne. Indeed, any Evolvers who spot her will open fire immediately and claim they thought she was one of the hostile creatures. If Stermbroyts can avoid this and make contact with the Travellers she hopes to get off-planet with them. Although desperate for company and the comforts of a properly equipped starship Stermbroyts has learned patience and caution in the years she has been hiding out. She will offer to trade information for passage off planet but will bitterly add that she would settle for a submachine gun and two magazines, and maybe a grenade or two.

Stermbroyts' hatred of the Evolvers goes beyond what they did to her crew and the fact they doomed her to years of scraping a miserable existence in the ruins. She knows about the Evolver movement and what they are doing to the Chirpers. The tragically short lives of her people are a curse – six years in the wilderness is a significant part of Stermbroyts' life span and she is already growing old – but the experiments are abominable. This is particularly so, since the captured Chirpers seem to know what is happening to them and are terrified. Whether they are scared of the casteing in general or the likely results she cannot say.

An ideal solution for Stermbroyts is for the Travellers to eliminate the Evolvers in graphic and bloody fashion then help her look for any other survivors. She thinks she has seen traces of a few but not recently. She will try to bargain with information and access to her ship, which she cannot operate without a crew. The latter is not much of a bargaining point since the Travellers can get access themselves without difficulty but Stermbroyts does not know that. In the end, the one thing she really wants is to get off this planet.

THE GREAT RITUAL

As the Travellers begin to realise what is really going on, Dyuskelkss makes himself scarce. It may be that he has a plan to destroy the Travellers or perhaps he just wants to complete his work before everything is disrupted. More than likely he cannot say for sure what his precise motivations are. What is certain is that in Dyuskelkss' twisted mind there is a compulsion to carry out one last ritual-experiment. Whether his companions are being cut down in a blaze of righteous gunfire or not, he takes no part in what happens at the base.

What the Travellers do when they realise who the Evolvers are and what they are doing is up to them. Their logic is that they are trying to save their species and that Chirpers are sub-sentient or irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. If they think the Travellers are going to react violently, the Evolvers will act first. They would prefer to take hostages than shoot it out but they have always known their expedition could come to a violent end. Those that can escape will try to make for their ship and may fall foul of the pseudo-Droyne or even a Chirper war party. Others will fight, bargain or flee in a random direction as circumstances dictate.

How the situation develops is very much dependent on what the Travellers do but the Referee should try to keep them distracted for a while. Any or all of the following incidents might occur:

An Evolver tries to destroy records of what has been done here. This might happen for various reasons but is most likely if the individual intends to surrender and wants to eliminate evidence.

An Evolver makes off with the records. This might happen if a zealous individual wants to save what has been learned at all costs. The Evolvers believe they are trying to save their whole species from a curse and may be willing to make any sacrifice.

A sniper opens fire from a vantage point in a ruined building. When the Travellers respond the sniper tries to lure them into traps or an ambush.

A group makes a run for the ship, hoping to escape or seal themselves inside. Their headlong dash through the ruins will cause some of them to fall foul of accidents, traps or pseudo-Droyne.

A parlay is offered by some of the Evolvers, who wish to negotiate safe passage, surrender or whatever else they think they can get. Others may attack the Travellers whilst the truce is in place, causing further confusion.

It will not be all that hard for the Travellers to overrun the Evolvers' base. Their exact number is left undetermined, so the Referee can always have a few

escape to continue harassing the Travellers... or to be found massacred by angry Chirpers. That might be a very sad discovery for the Travellers, as Chirpers are normally anything but vindictive. Clearly the Evolvers have done a lot of damage beyond their experiments.

It will become apparent at some point that Dyuskelkss is not present. He and a handful of his closest followers slipped away and are attempting to complete a final ritual-experiment at the chamber visited earlier. This is a mass casteing, with six Chirpers – all chained together – brought in through each avenue. Once the victims' chains are secured to improvised attachment points on the dais the ritual begins.

Ideally, the Travellers will arrive after dark, adding a creepy dimension to the proceedings. Evolver gunmen will try to keep the Travellers away and will fight to the death to do so. Sniping Dyuskelkss might seem easy but somehow all shots seem to miss him. This is a modified effect of his psionic invisibility and is imperfect. It certainly would not save him from an area weapon such as a grenade or sweeping the dais with machinegun fire – although that will kill the victims as well.

If Dyuskelkss completes his ritual, all 36 Chirpers will have casteed. This does not produce instant major effects; normally a Droyne grows into his caste over time. However, some Chirpers will simply die, others will collapse in distress and can be seen to be malformed in small ways within just minutes. They will grow into monsters over the next months. None is the breakthrough Dyuskelkss was hoping for, which will enrage him to the point where he begins shooting his victims or clubbing them to death with his sceptre. Hopefully the Travellers will stop him before this point.

AFTERMATH

Once Dyuskelkss is stopped, the surviving Chirpers can be freed. They are traumatised and will scatter into the ruins as soon as they can, ineffectually trying to fight if

anyone stops them. The Travellers will need to decide what to do with any surviving Evolvers and whether they want to search for other survivors of Stermbroyts' crew. There is an entire TL9 exploration ship to be salvaged if they desire. These events, and any further adventures on Osktyask 2, must be resolved by the Referee. The ruins are still dangerous and the pseudo-Droyne might be worth studying.

The Referee should keep in mind that this adventure is intended more as a horror-mystery story than a shoot-em-up. The Travellers will be moving around creepy ruins a lot, with the feeling they are being watched. Events on Osktyask 2 could play out in all manner of ways, depending on the actions of the Travellers. This adventure assumes that the Travellers consider the experiments carried out by the Evolvers to be cruel and unnecessary, and that they will come into conflict with the Evolvers at some point. The Travellers are as always free to take whatever path they see fit and may have a different viewpoint but even so the actions of Dyuskelkss are likely to cause conflict.

The likely course of the adventure sees the Travellers land and start exploring the city, encountering the pseudo-Droyne before making contact with the Evolvers. This will be followed by a gradual or sudden realisation that the Evolvers are conducting unpleasant experiments with the local Chirper population but the Travellers will not initially know why. For those with a shoot-first attitude, there are sufficient clues in the Evolvers' base to piece together what they are doing and why but it is likely the Travellers will find out along the way. Interactions with the Chirper population are entirely optional, adding another layer of complication if the Referee chooses.

ADVENTURE: REVELATIONS IN KENVAB

This adventure is assumed to take place somewhere close to the Far Side of Nowhere, as it involves a group of humans. They are independent of the local powers but maintain links to some of them. These humans have a base on a remote, borderline-habitable world that has grown into a modest-sized city. From there, a host of small starships range across the region finding whatever profit they can.

The city is known to its inhabitants as Rowdlin's Port, after the founder or an early leader – accounts of the early history vary considerably. It is more commonly referred to by outsiders as Kenvab, after the language spoken there. Kenvab is used as a 'secret language' on many worlds but only at Rowdlin's Port is it the primary mode of communication. This came about due to the port's shady origins as a smuggling base and although most of the ships operating out of the city today are legitimate, Kenvab still attracts those with little regard for the niceties of interstellar law or fair commerce. It does not really deserve a reputation as a pirate den or smuggler's hideaway but a ship registered out of Rowdlin's Port will always be the subject of a little suspicion. Her crew may be seen as excitingly dangerous when in fact they are nothing more than honest-ish salvagers.

ROWDLIN'S PORT (KENVAB)

Rowdlin's Port can be placed by the Referee on any more or less habitable world. The surrounding planet does not matter to most of the populace as Rowdlin's Port is a more or less self-sufficed city-state with a population of around 30,000. It consists of a residential and industrial area surrounding a main starport, with a couple of small landing fields specific to the larger industries. Around this is an agricultural region, with mining outposts scattered over a greater distance.

Tech Level could be rated at 11 or 9 depending on how the measure is taken. A very small amount of TL11 components are manufactured on-planet and TL11 equipment can be put together on a cottage-industry basis. Most of the indigenous industry operates at TL9 and this is the level the city-state would eventually fall

to if external trade were to be cut off. Rowdlin's Port can operate at TL11 with effort but cannot sustain this level for long without assistance.

Not all of that assistance is deliberate or willing. Salvage is big business at the port and whilst the operators know it is not in their interests to condone open piracy they are not choosy about where salvage comes from. Likewise, some of the goods traded at the port are sourced in a less than ethical manner. This is more likely to be a rapaciously one-sided trade deal than a raid but with so little oversight it is likely that some goods are obtained by violence either directly or by the client they were bought from.

Rowdlin's Port imports whatever it can get and mostly exports finished goods of one sort or another. Businesses are usually tailored to one segment of the market, such as mid-tech vehicles and equipment or high-tech electronics. A significant source of revenue is what might kindly be called 'bespoke starships and spacecraft'. In this case 'bespoke' means a unique craft put together from bits of many others. Those who can afford to pay a premium will get a vessel as close to their initial specification as possible. Others will get something capable of meeting their needs, more or less, with significant compromises made during construction. Only one standard design is built at Rowdlin's Port, an illegal copy of the *Torlex* class small transport. All others are put together from what is available at the time.

These vessels are usually sold to offworld clients but sometimes a business based at the port will request a ship to meet its needs. Construction is a trade-off between time and cost. Those that wait will get a better ship, although delays can be long if the builders have to seek specific parts or buy them in from higher-tech worlds. Conversion of ships and cheap repairs are also common, although the groundside yards can only handle vessels up to 1,000 tons or so.

The port has an orbital component of sorts, not a starport as such but it can serve as a terminal for unstreamlined craft. Shuttles to the surface are available but there is very little else in terms of amenities for

those passing through. The orbital 'port' is really nothing more than a marshalling point for resources used in orbital starship construction. There are cradles for larger craft, up to 3,000 tons or so, but the maximum capacity is rather loose since the cradles were improvised from available materials and have been extended since. They must be dismantled and reconfigured every time a large vessel arrives wanting repairs or someone commissions a big ship. In theory, with enough resources, the orbital construction and repair works could be reconfigured to accommodate *Deepnight Revelation*.

The city groundside has a loose Law Level 4. It is legal, if that is the right word, to carry handguns and similar weapons within the city and more potent weaponry is acceptable for security personnel or those with significant assets – like a starship or salvage yard. 'Legal' in this sense means there are no formal rules on the subject but this is common practice. Law enforcement is rather loose and works on the concept of public and private areas. In a private area, such as the property of a company or rich individual, laws and rules are made and enforced as the owner pleases. If what they do causes a problem, negotiation with concerned (and well-armed) parties usually settles the matter. If not, a short but violent conflict is likely.

Public areas, loosely defined as anywhere not under the control of one of the city-state's major players, are regulated by accepted custom, which is enforced by a small number of appointed marshals. These are assisted by concerned citizens at need, which can lead to a highly variable response. Sometimes a major crime will not be investigated; on other occasions a simple arrest can explode into a free-for-all as various untrained people try to suppress the resisting suspect and accidentally draw others into the situation.

The situation is less anarchic than it might at first seem. The city is ruled by a council of powerful individuals who own most of the major businesses. It is not in their interests to have chaos on the streets, so the system of appointed marshals and judges is backed up by occasional deployments of private security personnel.

Any criminal group getting too powerful is likely to be smashed without regard to due process or evidence. This has also been known to happen to legitimate businesses that threatened the elite.

The general populace do not experience much crime or violence despite this rather loose legal system. Activities that cause major harm are kept in check by the threat of heavy-handed backlash and less serious wrongdoing is often 'corrected' by a posse of concerned citizens with or without the intervention of a marshal. Mistakes are made, of course, but for the most part those who do not trouble others are left in peace. This suits most people, since it allows them to get on with living their lives and running their businesses. Overall, Rowdlin's Port is not a bad place to live but it can be hazardous for outsiders until they become a known quantity and show they can follow the city's unwritten rules for conduct.

KENVAB

The adventure title refers to 'Kenvab', a dialect derived from Oynprith and Oldarth, the two primary languages of the Far Side of Nowhere region. Kenvab has become almost a separate language, partly although mispronunciation and general linguistic drift and partly through the use of idiom. Some Kenvab words came about as a result of datanet memes that were popular 200 years ago. Someone who does not know the language might be tantalised by the odd part-recognised word or phrase but will be entirely unable to work out what any of it means. However, using a translating device quickly reveals the origins of the language and permits a database of words and phrases to be built up very rapidly. Once a Traveller has an ear for Kenvab, more can be made out without being able to speak the language in the usual sense.

TORLEX TRANSPORT/ UTILITY VESSEL

The Torlex class is a common workhorse in the Far Side of Nowhere. Designed with easy customisation in mind, it is manufactured under license on several worlds and illegally copied elsewhere. Some compromises were made in order to obtain the greatest utility from the vessel yet retain performance suitable for a wide range of applications. Torlex vessels are encountered as salvage and mining ships as well as in more mundane light haulage and tramp-trading operations.

Basic hull form is an asymmetrical wedge, with crew areas along one side and 'working' spaces on the other. The wedge is two decks high at the rear, tapering to one deck (the upper deck) at the fore edge. The aft compartments of the wedge are mostly configured as a double-height area for fuel or cargo. The port-side section of the main wedge is a 150 ton modular area. On many ships this is used as cargo space but can carry passenger accommodation, machinery or mining equipment... or anything else the owner deems necessary.

The central area of the wedge contains a dedicated 64-ton cargo hold and two 54-ton configurable cargo/fuel containers. All three are two decks high. Configurable containers can carry cargo or fuel but not both. To starboard of this is a single-deck-high fuel tank containing sufficient for a single one-parsec jump and eight weeks of power plant operation. This fuel tank occupies the lower deck; above it are the ship's engineering spaces.

The upper deck at the starboard side of the wedge houses the ship's power plant and drive systems, with additional crew areas housed in a single-deck-high strip running across the front of the wedge. These include the crew accommodation, which takes the form of a cramped bulk accommodation block for up to eight personnel, separated from a four-cabin accommodation block by a 16-ton common area. A ship of this type rarely needs to carry more than 4–6 crew, but additional personnel are sometimes needed for prospecting, mining, salvage or other work. If more than 12–16 crew are needed, additional accommodation must be set up in the modular area.

Additional crew facilities include workshops and a medical bay. These are normally accessed from the crew area but have connections into the modular section, enabling medical assistance to be quickly supplied to passengers or workers in the modular area. There is also a short protrusion forward of the leading edge of the wedge, housing the bridge and command systems.

The Torlex carries light armament as standard, consisting of single beam laser turrets located on the port and starboard ends of the wedge. Four other turret sockets are included as standard, enabling additional weaponry to be slotted in as needed. When not mounting weaponry, the housings are often used to carry sensor equipment or as small additional cargo spaces. Three of the four empty sockets are located on the upper surface of the wedge, with one more under the bridge protrusion. This chin mounting is often used for anti-personnel weaponry such as autocannon, enabling it to sweep the area in front of the main cargo doors.

The Torlex is, by definition, a starship but might be better considered an in-system vessel with jump capability. Most spend many months or even years in a single system before moving on. Indeed, some vessels are outfitted without a jump drive and with the jump fuel tank reconfigured as cargo or machinery space. These in-system craft can be encountered serving outposts and installations across an inhabited system. More commonly the jump drive is mounted, enabling the ship to relocate at the end of a contract. The configurable cargo/fuel containers allow up to three consecutive jumps, if necessary, so a Torlex can reach most destinations sooner or later. This makes them competitive in the tramp-trading marketplace, shipping up to 322 tons of cargo on a jump-1 route whilst retaining the ability to cross to another cluster or main.

The inclusion of aerofins and a relatively high-performance drive enables the Torlex to land in areas unsafe for many other craft. Despite the asymmetric layout of the hull, aerodynamic qualities are good. Turbulent atmospheres are never entirely safe but a Torlex can punch through storms that would ground a lesser craft. Its light hull armour might be an asset in a fight but is primarily intended to protect the craft from minor collisions and 'unscheduled terrain interactions'.

TRANSPORT/UTILITY VESSEL

TORLEX

TL11

TONS COST (MCr)

Hull	600 tons, standard (25% modular)	—	37.5
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 2	15	0.75
M-Drive	Thrust 3	18	36
Jump Drive	Jump-1 (very advanced, decreased fuel x2)	11	20.625
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power: 400	40	20
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x1, 8 weeks of operation	62	—
Bridge	Holographic Controls	20	3.75
Computer	Computer/15	—	2
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Single Turrets (beam laser) x2	2	1.4
	Turret Sockets x4	4	—
Systems	Cargo Crane (Capacity 300 tons)	3.5	3.5
	Aerofins	30	3
	Grappling Arms x2	4	2
	Medical Bay	4	2
	Workshop	12	0.3
Staterooms	Bulk Accommodation (capacity 8)	14	1.4
	Standard x4	16	2
Common Areas		16	1.6
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
Cargo	Fuel/Cargo Modules (54 tons) x2	113	0.54
	Modular Space (cargo)	150	—
	Cargo	64	—

TOTAL: MCr141.465

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT,
ASTROGATOR,
ENGINEERS X2, GUNNERS X2

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr11788.75/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr141.465

POWER REQUIREMENTS

180

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

120

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

60

JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

10

WEAPONS

240

HULL POINTS



DECK 2

DECK 1

LEGEND

1. Sensors
2. Bridge
3. Turret Socket
4. Air Lock
5. Medical Bay
6. Bulk Accomodations
7. Common Area
8. Staterooms
9. Single Turret
10. Workshop
11. Cargo Hold
12. Modular Space/Cargo
13. Fuel/Cargo Module
14. Power Plant
15. Jump Drive
16. Cargo Crane
17. Manoeuvre Drive
18. Grappling Arm

RUMOURS OF A DISTANT FREEPORT

The Travellers are likely to learn about Rowdlin's Port as a result of starport rumours somewhere in the Far Side of Nowhere. They will become aware of a spacer crew in port who others seem to be avoiding. There is nothing particularly unusual about them; all are human, dressed in typical going-portside clothing. They are not misbehaving in any way but there is a space around them whereas other crews seem content to mingle and exchange tall tales over a beer.

The crew are from the vessel *TANMIS*, whose name is an acronym for There Ain't No Money In Salvage. They are, as the name suggests, a freelance salvage crew. It is not hard to find out who they are or their ship registration and a quick database search will indicate their vessel is a Torlex transport/utility ship modified for the salvage role. The Torlex class is common in the region and built at many yards. This one is registered out of somewhere called Rowdlin's Port. Interestingly, the ship's database entry shows a string of advisories from port officials referring to discrepancies in the ship's papers, possible connection with smuggling or piracy and other unsubstantiated suggestions the vessel is operated by criminals. There is no mention of any attempt to prove any of this.

Data on Rowdlin's Port may shed some light on this. The port is notorious as a freeport where pirates and smugglers operate freely. This impression is largely untrue but the bad reputation of the place has grown rather than diminished over the years. The database entry notes that ships registered out of the port are often smugglers, pirates or other criminals (again, this is not really true) and may be cobbled together or repaired to an inadequate standard using salvaged components. This part *is* more or less true, including a note to the effect that ship's papers issued by Rowdlin's Port are not always trustworthy. Inspection standards and crew certifications range from poor to non-existent.

All this seems pretty damning but there is no sign the crew of *TANMIS* are anything but a salvage crew. They are weary of this sort of thing and eventually one of the crew snaps something unpleasant back in response to an insult. This rapidly escalates into posturing and threatening, and it seems likely a fight is about to break out. The Travellers could intervene to try to calm things down or deter the aggressors, who are encouraged by the fact there is a bar full of them and only five *TANMIS* crewmembers.

Depending on the approach taken, an Average (8+) Diplomat, Persuade or Leadership check will suffice to keep things getting out of hand in the next few moments. This will give the Travellers time to persuade the crew of *TANMIS* to leave with them. That might require some negotiation since the crew do not know the Travellers and are angry enough to possibly want to stay and fight. If the Travellers do not get the *TANMIS* crew out of the bar or the situation escalates further, a brawl erupts.

There are five *TANMIS* crewmembers in the bar and perhaps a dozen who are hostile to them, plus bystanders who want no part of a punch-up. This is not a deliberate mobbing but an argument that escalates, so rather than a concerted attack the likely course of events is shoving and shouting from one or two people, then someone else starts being aggressive and pretty soon someone throws a punch. From there, everything gets confused. People join in, others duck out. Some try to break the fight up and end up getting thumped. Amid this chaos the Travellers have a chance to extricate the *TANMIS* crew if they want – possibly peeling an aggressor off one of them or putting someone out of action to facilitate a withdrawal.

If the Travellers offer significant help the crew will be grateful. They offer to buy a few drinks in a quieter bar and if the Travellers accept there is some information to be had. It turns out that the crew's home port has a bad reputation but does not really deserve it. It was a haven for bad sorts a few decades ago but most of the ships that operate out of Rowdlin's Port these days are legitimate, if lacking in proper paperwork.

The port itself is a marvellous place to obtain things not normally available elsewhere. Salvage ships and long-range traders bring in all manner of goods and merchants are rarely choosy about who they sell to. There are exceptions, and a few things nobody will deal in, but for the most part goods of all kinds can be bought and sold for the right price. The port is also a good place to obtain information. Somewhere in between the two is a small but healthy market in artefacts and curiosities. Some of the items on sale seem to be alien relics, some from highly advanced civilisations, whilst others defy explanation.

THE TRAVELLERS AT ROWDLIN'S PORT

If the Travellers follow the rumours they should have little difficulty in finding Rowdlin's Port. As usual, the arrival of such a big ship causes quite a stir, especially

if the Travellers have been transiting at a high jump rate as they will arrive long before any local ship encountered could bring news of their appearance in the region. The handful of homebuilt or salvaged armed craft guarding the port could be knocked apart by *Deepnight Revelation's* secondary batteries in a matter of moments.

The port operators will be quite anxious to get some of the Travellers' crew on the ground where they can find out more about them, and perhaps make some deals, but they are too experienced to let it show. Nevertheless, the Travellers are offered landing clearance for their shuttles along with an offer to make their needs known so they can be most expeditiously fulfilled.

Planetside, the Travellers find a curious lack of customs and immigration officials. The port is guarded by a group of marshals appointed by the owners and they are not really interested in whether the Travellers are smuggling

contraband – there is little that would be considered contraband here anyway. The Travellers are informed that sidearms are acceptable, and indeed might be advisable, and their security arrangements for the shuttles are their own business but toting combat weapons such as laser rifles around the city 'will likely upset someone and you don't want that'. This vague statement actually sums up weapons laws in the port – most conduct will be ignored until it threatens or offends someone, at which point it may be too late to reconsider.

Naturally, the operators of such a large and powerful ship will be assumed to be extremely wealthy and it follows that they have come to the port to spend money. The Travellers will find themselves at the centre of a flurry of offers to buy and sell supplies, goods, components and all manner of other items. Mundane items created at TL9 are plentiful; TL11 items are rare but may be available in small quantities.

LANGUAGE AND CURRENCY

The first language of those who raised at Rowdlin's Port is Kenvab and almost everyone speaks it at least passably. Oldarth is also widely spoken; Oynprith is not. The locals have no idea just how powerful TL15 electronic equipment can be, so are unlikely to suspect the Travellers have personal translating devices. Thus, if they realise the Travellers cannot understand Kenvab they may use it to communicate information among themselves that they do not want the Travellers to know. The Travellers may be amused to hear local businessmen talking openly among themselves about how they are going to fleece the poor dumb newcomers whilst maintaining a façade of honest commerce.

Rowdlin's Port uses a locally produced currency officially known as the Rowdlin's Port Commercial Transfer Medium but universally referred to as Transmed. Most transactions are in electronic form but there is a system of coins for minor purchases and promissory notes for situations where large amounts of hard cash need to be transferred. Slang for a coin-based transaction is a 'small' whilst a note-based transfer is a 'big'. This was perhaps inevitable since the currency itself is a 'transfer medium'. Such is the thinking behind the Kenvab language.

Comparisons to the Imperial Credit are meaningless this far from Charted Space. For convenience the Referee can assume that Credit prices translate

directly to an amount of Transmed. The Travellers do not have any of the local currency to start with but that is not really a problem. Once they know what the locals want or need, they can fabricate goods from raw materials to sell or trade for what they need.

Alternatively, Transmed notes and coins are easy to counterfeit using TL15 manufacturing equipment. Within hours of arrival the Travellers can have unlimited currency. Someone might notice the deception sooner or later but if counterfeit currency is used only for small transactions this is unlikely to occur for some time – probably long after the Travellers have left. The only way counterfeiting will offend the major local figures is if they lose out because of it; there will be no concerted response if the only victims are shopkeepers and bar owners.

There are some things the Travellers cannot simply buy with money. Those will require different solutions, although exactly how the Travellers go about obtaining whatever it is they desire is up to them. Barter is one option, violence another. Creative Travellers can get what they want without going to much trouble but the Referee should keep in mind that there are several powerful factions in the city, most of whom will be quite happy to throw obstacles in the way just to prevent their opponents gaining an advantage.

The port offers a chance for some groundside liberty time and the crew will be eager to get out of the ship for a while. Unless the Travellers confine everyone aboard – which will cause severe morale problems – there will always be parties of crewmembers ashore. These may become involved in all manner of shenanigans and misadventures or might be asked to find out information for the Travellers whilst they are busy elsewhere.

The presence of *Deepnight Revelation* represents both a possible threat and a bonanza for local businesses – large and small. A big crew spending money in the shops and bars is a good thing, although it might cause friction as the businesses compete for the Travellers' attention and money. Those that lose out may seek to redress the situation by underhand or very direct means and, of course, the crew might get caught up in a dispute they do not realise they have indirectly caused.

TREMDON RAINER: SALVAGE MAGNATE

Rainer is not the only salvage yard owner but is by far the most powerful and wealthy. He operates a small flotilla of salvage ships and buys from any of the freelancers who find something unusual. The majority of salvage that comes in to the port is mundane, typically from failed outposts or broken-down TL9–10 ships. This can be found in any of the small yards but anything that stands out is snapped up by Rainer's representatives and stashed until someone is willing to pay top Transmed for it. Rainer can afford to pay more than other salvage factors and hang on to goods for years. Sooner or later he will make a profit on the item and is adept at finding a buyer even for the most unusual of objects.

Rainer's approach to the Travellers is direct and courteous. He makes a point of having a representative make contact with every new ship that arrives, large or small, and the format is well established. The Travellers are offered the services of shuttles planetside and a refuelling tanker if their ship cannot land. The fee for this is about standard for refined fuel and a passenger service, although it will take a few trips to carry all the necessary fuel to orbit. The Travellers are provided with a standard list of services, spares and components along with an invitation to discuss any special requirements and Rainer's inventory of 'non-standard and unique items'.

If the invitation is accepted, Rainer hosts the Travellers at his personal dwelling. This is a compound on the southern side of the city, far enough away from the extensive salvage yards to avoid the noise and mess they generate. Rainer has an extensive collection of ground

vehicles, some of them unique, and also a handful of grav cars. These are for 'work' purposes, allowing him to move swiftly from one part of the city to another, whereas the ground vehicles are mostly for show or the pleasure of driving. There are no roads outside the city, so the high-performance vehicles are restricted to the racetrack Rainer has constructed just outside its limits.

Rainer is a businessman first and foremost. He is generally honest but understands the necessity of underhand dealings with those not inclined to play straight. He will bargain hard but respects a good deal and generally prefers 'straight' trading. This is not so much a moral stance as a pragmatic one; a reputation for trustworthiness makes him a preferred trading partner. Those who do not play straight with Rainer usually come to lament their choices when he resorts to the same tactics.

Tremdon Rainer is a middle-aged man who dresses and acts in a smart-casual sort of way. His dealings are handled in a relaxed and apparently informal manner, which disguises his thoroughness and strength of will. Rainer has no political ambitions; he simply wants to run his business to make a good profit and enjoy the rewards that brings. Thus any involvement in politics is out of necessity and seen as a distraction from his main field of endeavour.

Rainer will show the Travellers around his small but well-equipped estate and will warm to those who show an interest in his collection of vehicles. They vary from primitive conveyances built by emerging cultures to top-end luxury and race vehicles built in the high-tech worlds of the Commonwealth or Grand Republic. At the slightest encouragement he will have a selected few moved to the track and what was to be a business lunch will become a sort of trackside picnic. Normally Rainer would drive vehicles himself to show them off or have his team of professional drivers do it. However, if the Travellers seem competent and a good working relationship appears likely Rainer might even allow someone to drive or race his precious cars.

Amid this pleasant diversion, there are moments of business discussion, conducted almost in passing. Rainer is interested in where the Travellers came from but cares more about how to profit from their arrival than their distant origins. He makes sure the Travellers know that his people can build or repair spacecraft and can supply components. Like everyone else in the region he does not understand the technological gap between what he has and the Travellers' equipment, although he is aware there is a difference.

Rainer also has a 'special items' inventory, which he flatly refuses to discuss. If the Travellers want to know about his special items they can make an appointment and he will show them in person. Description does not do these items justice, he says.

Rainer is right about that but his reluctance to describe his treasures stems in part from his inability to do so. Some of the items are obviously alien but Rainer has no idea what they are beyond that. He would rather share in the mystery of an object with his guests that admit he does not actually know what something is or does. His 'treasure house' is located at his main salvage yard, which is heavily secured by double fences and patrolling guards as well as electronic devices. Inside the very strongly built warehouse is essentially a museum of the unusual and strange.

Many items are only mildly interesting or of rather niche interest. Rocks with unusual magnetic properties, picked up on some planetoid somewhere, are displayed alongside bone and horn tools produced by primitive people. There is a fair-sized section dedicated to jewellery from many different cultures, some of it extremely intricate and beautiful despite having been made by low-tech craftsmen. There are also more vehicles, notably prototypes that clearly did not work out. However, it is the special items that Rainer most wants to show off.

Orb, Alien, Unknown Origin stands on a plinth near the centre of the collection. Rainer has no idea about it, other than that a salvage crew brought it in about 10 years back and he paid a high price for it as a curiosity. The orb is covered in swirling patterns and is slightly warmer to the touch than would be expected. It is obviously a Droyne artifact, though Rainer does not know this and sensitives can 'read' the patterns. This is a data recording device from Oyskrusk's expedition, intact and in working order.

Decorative Object, Alien, Unknown Origin stands on the next plinth. Again, Rainer does not know what it is but the Travellers will recognise it as a hand-held device used by Oyskrusk's people. Its function is not immediately apparent but those who have witnessed the scenes triggered by carvings the Droyne expedition left behind will recall seeing it in the hands of the scientist Tyovask, whose terrible fate is described in *The Riftsedge Transit*.

Advanced Weapon, Non-Functional stands on its own plinth nearby. It is clearly not of Droyne construction but would not fit a normal human very well. The distance between grip, stock and point of balance is all wrong for a human, unless of course the weapon was exceedingly ill-made. The device appears to be some kind of composite laser/particle weapon, apparently created at TL12 or so. It is powered by a heavy backpack unit that would require some adaptation to be made comfortable for a human. Rainer has no idea where this weapon came from but is intrigued at the possibility of an advanced culture in the region. The device is very old – several hundred years at least – so the unknown makers may be extinct by now. Rainer would dearly love to get hold of more artefacts from this culture, not for use as weapons but simply out of interest and a desire to sell them when the time comes at an outrageous price.

The Pride of the Collection takes up the whole rear section of the warehouse. It is a space vessel, mostly intact, of about 20 displacement tons. At first Rainer thought it was some kind of racing craft, but it has a concealed section running the length of the hull under the crew compartment. This houses a (non-functional) particle accelerator weapon of rather clumsy design. Examining it suggests that it would have a short range and leak radiation into the craft. What looks like concealment appears to be an attempt to mitigate this, although using the weapon would still be detrimental to the crew.

The craft was constructed at around TL12, apparently for a species a little smaller than humans and has suffered a serious impact. Rainer was told it was found drifting in space but it appears to have been crash-landed at some point. The underside of the hull is heavily damaged and the internal systems are in such bad condition that most have been dismantled and removed. These are on display outside the craft, along with odd sections of hull and loose parts that could not be fitted anywhere. Rainer is fascinated by this craft – who built it, why it carried the weapon it did and how it met its fate. The wreck has defied all investigation by his people.



Rainer's Goods

The Travellers can get all the TL9 parts and spares they want from Rainer but those might not interest them all that much. He can also arrange a good deal on large quantities of mundane items the Travellers might want – vehicles, personal weapons and the like. Rowdlin's Port has a vacc suit manufacturing facility; the Travellers could always buy direct but Rainer will act as a middle man and streamline the process for them. Such items can be bought for currency at list price. In bulk or as part of a large package Rainer can get a discount of up to 40%, including his own cut.

There are some items he can offer that are not straight cash sales.

TL12 Fusion Reactors: Rainer has access to three fusion reactors, salvaged from wrecked ships presumed to be out of the Grand Republic or Commonwealth. Two are almost identical, 24-ton self-contained reactors with an output of 360 Power each. The third is much larger at 120 tons, with an output of 1,800 Power. Rainer has one of the reactors powering his main salvage yard but would sell all three if a suitable deal could be made. Such potent power sources are rare and precious in the region, so Rainer's asking price starts at five million Transmed per ton. However, he would be very reluctant to simply take cash – he can get that for selling less rare items – so Rainer will want to trade something valuable as at least a part of the deal. The units cannot be broken down into smaller power plants; each must be bought whole. *These reactors are old and have been rebuilt but are in good working condition. Rainer's cash price is high but he can be bargained down with a good trade.*

Nuclear Warheads, Various: Rainer is in possession of a number of nuclear devices. This makes some of his competitors nervous, which he understands – he would not want anyone else to have such weapons. In fact he would prefer to get rid of them but only if he can get a good deal. There are 22 ship-to-ship missile warheads, without electronics or propulsion, and four larger nukes. These are four-megaton strategic devices, again without propulsion or electronics but with all necessary arming codes and maintenance equipment. The warheads are about 12 years old and in functional condition. As with other special items Rainer is not willing to take straight cash but expects a trade involving something else he can hoard and later sell. His asking price is 10 million Transmed for each of the smaller weapons and 100 million Transmed for each of the larger ones. *All the warheads are in functional condition. They could be used as demolition charges as is or fitted to missiles with a little ingenuity.*

F3A4 'Thunderbolt' Class Interceptors: Rainer has three of these craft, which are described in *The Far Side of Nowhere*. All have been damaged and rebuilt but are currently little short of factory condition. These high-performance reaction drive fighters are not normally available outside the Commonwealth, so instead of the usual price Rainer is asking 25 million Transmed for each, with at least some of the value coming in traded items. *All three fighters are in good working order. Their performance is very impressive despite a short endurance and some of the pilots on the expedition will make spurious cases for their purchase.*

U27 Support Vessel: Rainer has a Commonwealth-built reaction drive utility/support craft available for sale. It was rebuilt from a near-total wreck but is now in good working condition. Rainer is asking 50 million Transmed, including some traded items. *This craft has indeed been rebuilt from salvaged parts and it shows. However, whilst not pretty the vessel is in good working order.*

Jump Drive Components, Assorted: Rainer has a large stockpile of jump drive components, including a couple of almost-complete drives. Normally his yard sells small amounts to those seeking to maintain their drives and occasionally puts a whole drive together to fit a newly-built ship. However, orders for ships have been very low in recent years and Rainer is willing to sell off his stockpile as a single lot, sold as seen, for 25 million Transmed, of which at least some must be valuable traded items. The stockpile comes to a little over 400 displacement tons but there are a lot of valueless components still attached to the useful ones. The actual amount of spares is probably about half the total tonnage. *Most of these components are from TL9–10 drives and will need to be sorted out from broken and useless parts they are still attached to. There are still a lot of useful items here – 200 tons plus 20 additional tons for every point of Effect on an Average (8+) Engineer check and a possible lucky find among them.*

Starships, Utility: Rainer has two Torlex class starships for sale. Unlike most of his goods these were not salvaged but built here in Rowdlin's Port. This was a slow process, as parts were not always available, and both contain some salvaged equipment. Rainer is asking 150 million Transmed for each, which is not much above the standard new-build price. He is willing to sell for straight cash as part of a larger deal; otherwise he wants some traded goods in return. *Although these two vessels might have some quirks they are entirely functional.*

The Lucky Find

Amid the jumble of jump drive components the Travellers will come across a number of items that do not fit with the others. Connectors are the wrong size and shape or the component does not match the form or function of any part of a known jump drive. When sorted out from among the mundane items, which is not a quick or simple job, these components do not make up a whole jump system. It is possible to see how some of them might fit into an alternate design of jump drive but others have no function that any of the Travellers can discern. In fact this is because they are from other systems, including fuel processors and power generation equipment.

The components are all manufactured to the same close tolerances and have the same kind of connectors; they clearly belong together or as part of a larger system.

What is also clear is that they were not produced by any of the powers in the Far Side of Nowhere region. The jump drive components come from a system that uses the same basic mode of operation but was apparently built by a culture that thinks differently to humans. The possibility that it could have been left behind by Oyskrusk's expedition can be ruled out; the materials are closer to TL12–13 than Ancients technology. However, if the general layout of the systems are postulated from the components in the Travellers' possession, a drive system built in the style of known Ancients vessels is one of the possible configurations. This suggests that a culture exists in the region which was influenced by the Ancients. *These components are from a Firbolg ship found derelict very far from here. They may be a clue to the existence (or former existence) of a starfaring Firbolg culture.*

DOING A DEAL

Rainer simply will not part with some items – notably his special collection – for any amount of money. Other items, such as nuclear warheads and the reactors, will be sold but only if something is offered in part-exchange. If the Travellers can provide Rainer with items he can sell at a good profit and especially if these items are easier to sell than the ones he currently has, he will come to an arrangement he thinks is fair.

One possibility is to offer to build Rainer a money-making machine of some kind. The Travellers could put together a 'black box' fabrication unit to carry out a process or turn out specific items at a low cost. For example, an automated forge with a built-in power plant, which could produce bonded superdense materials would be a game-changer for the region. Bonded superdense can only be produced at TL14 and is unknown in the Far Side of Nowhere. Produced as standard-sized billets with suitable attachment points it could be used as applique armour on spacecraft – and Rainer would have a monopoly.

There are other possibilities; a fabrication unit capable of turning out mundane items like drill bits and hand tools made from advanced materials would be a source of endless revenue for someone who has a lot of scrap materials. It is difficult to put a price on such an item since it is unique in the region but Rainer is a clever man who can see commercial possibilities once the function of a device is demonstrated to him. He is also aware that it would be difficult if not impossible to maintain such a device in the long term. At the very least he would need a suitable stock of spares to go with it. If these conditions can be met, Rainer is willing to discuss an exchange for one or more of his restricted items and a discount on the cash price.

Alternatively, there is something the Travellers can do for Rainer. He is absolutely fascinated by the derelict craft in his collection. The crew who sold it to him did not reveal its origins and stopped coming through the port a couple of years later. To the best of Rainer's knowledge no other vessels or ships of this type have been encountered but after a spending a great deal of money on investigating he thinks he has a lead on where the craft was found. His data is more negative than positive but the process of eliminating systems where anything present would likely already have been found has led him to a location.

Rainer wants the Travellers and their high-jump ship to go to this location and conduct a search. If the Travellers bring him proof there is something worth salvaging he will open up his restricted items for sale. If they can salvage more craft or parts for this one Rainer will consider that a large part-payment on whatever items the Travellers want to buy. This does not include the two alien artefacts and the strange weapon but if the Travellers bring him something spectacular Rainer will even consider selling one of them.

DOING BUSINESS WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THE MONEY AND ALL THE GUNS

The Travellers should not have needed to worry about money during their expedition, other than finding a medium of exchange that local cultures felt was acceptable. This situation is no exception. The Travellers can get local currency in a variety of ways or counterfeit it easily enough if they are willing to take the risk of being discovered.

One way to obtain local currency, probably in the form of electronic credit rather than physical cash, is to provide services. This might include survey and salvage jobs that could lead to more adventures, but there is a ready market in repairs, technical assistance and items fabricated aboard *Deepnight Revelation*. Building TL12+ grav vehicles, for example, in the vessel's construction decks is a viable option. Resources can be obtained through purchase or more directly by mining, enabling the Travellers to put out high-value goods at a steady rate. Weapons are another option, although this risks destabilising the local political scene. Electronics and luxury goods could also be offered for sale. Alternatively the Travellers could sell off precious metals and materials they have picked up along the way – the market for gold, platinum and the like is not unlimited but these materials are valuable at Rowdlin's Port because they can be sold elsewhere.

The Travellers might also use less savoury methods. The local electronic finance sector operates on a TL11 basis and could be cracked in hours or less by the computers aboard *Deepnight Revelation*. Encryption that seems secure to the locals cannot withstand even a brute-force hacking attempt and it might be that the locals do not even consider a hack could have taken place – at least at first. Eventually someone might realise the Travellers have unlimited

money yet do not appear to have done any trading to get it and may smell a rat. This will produce a backlash but ultimately there is little the Travellers have to fear from a backwater freeport.

This applies – even more so – if the Travellers decide to simply take what they want. There is really nothing stopping them shooting their way across the port or even bracketing it with nuclear warheads and making it cease to exist... except their own decency and that of their crew. The sort of people who would sign up for an expedition of this sort – and be accepted for it – are highly unlikely to condone this sort of behaviour. A desperate crew, with a ship on its last legs, might turn raider out of necessity but under any other circumstances the crew are unlikely to go along with murder for profit and may mutiny.

This does not mean the Travellers cannot use threats or the occasional underhanded method to get what they want. The crew are unlikely to complain all that much about hacking the local bank's computers, especially if it saves time and reduces the chance of casualties. However, the Referee should keep in mind that the *Deepnight Corporation* recruited decent people at the start of the mission. Even if it is convenient for the Travellers to act like spacegoing murder-hoboes their crew will not stand for it.

The power and capabilities of *Deepnight Revelation* allow the Travellers to bargain from a position of strength and to accept high fees for doing something that would be difficult for the locals. If the Travellers are careful to conceal just how easy the tasks they take on actually are or how cheaply their construction decks can fabricate goods, they can leverage their advantages without offending anyone.

IN SEARCH OF RAINER'S SPACEFARERS

The system Rainer thinks the craft was found in is a few parsecs away. The Referee should select a suitable system; ideally one that would be difficult to reach with jump-1 or jump-2 ships. This means it will have seen little traffic, in turn making it possible that other craft might be present. An existing star system can be used instead of the one presented below.

Reaching this system is hardly a problem for the Travellers and their powerful ship but for the locals it means a transit of many weeks and perhaps crossing a two or three parsec gap. If the Travellers have not gone into much detail about the capabilities of their vessel Rainer might expect them to be away for several months, where in fact the trip is just one or two weeks each way. This may have implications for the plans of other notables at Rowdlin's Port.

Navigational data on the systems in between the port and the destination will be available for a small fee. In some cases it is quite detailed, in others little more than star type and whether gas giants are present. The Travellers might of course have adventures along the way, perhaps undertaking some exploration as they go but sooner or later they will reach their objective. Their information up to that point is limited but might give them some idea what to expect.

- The mysterious starfarers seem to have possessed TL12, equivalent to the best in the Far Side of Nowhere region but appears to have been developed independently as their design philosophy has few similarities.
- The starfarers are humanoid but a little smaller than the typical human. Doorways are lower and seats are smaller. They could be Droyne or similar creatures but the overall impression is that items were built for creatures closely resembling humans who do not grow above 1.6 metres in height.
- It is possible the mysterious weapon in Rainer's collection was made by these people. It would fit their projected dimensions.
- The mysterious spacefarers' craft was designed to be fast and manoeuvrable, mounting a particle weapon. The design suggests it would have leaked at least some radiation into the crew compartment when used. This suggests desperation or ignorance, or perhaps a tolerance for high radiation.
- Life support systems in the salvaged craft were set up to provide a 1.2g environment with an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere.

- The craft was not set up for long-term habitation. An equivalent human craft might have an endurance of a few hours to perhaps a day or so.

All this points to a combat craft of some kind, carried by a larger vessel crewed by people with a high tolerance for radiation and probably from a high-g world. There is not much more to be discerned from the vessel, although the Travellers may infer all manner of conclusions. The remainder of this section presents the story of these mysterious starfarers for the use of the Referee. The Travellers may or may not discover the whole truth in the course of the adventure.

The spacefarers are Firbolg from a high-gravity world, with smaller but more muscular body frames as a result. They are one of the rare communities that reached starfaring levels of technology and were assisted in this by Oyskrusk's expedition – although not intentionally. Oyskrusk's crew was becoming depleted at the time they found a population of primitive Firbolg and he decided to recruit some of them to fill menial positions aboard the ship. The project rapidly went awry, ending in a large-scale rebellion by the Firbolg. Oyskrusk's crew withdrew, not realising a few items had been left behind.

Over the millennia the Firbolg advanced, suffering setbacks but eventually attaining a spacefaring level of technology. By then the objects left behind by Oyskrusk's expedition had attained religious significance, although opinions were divided as to whether they were gifts or a threat. Eventually the Firbolg managed to decipher some of the information stored in the devices and built themselves jump-capable ships. Soon afterward a schism split their society and those who thought the 'gods' were inimical and threatening drove out those who wanted to worship them in the hope they would come back.

The worshippers set up colonies and eventually built their own starships. Soon afterward, war broke out between the worshippers and those who feared the return of their gods. At its heart was the deep-seated and sincere belief that worship could bring the gods back to the Firbolg. The worshippers wanted to lead their race into a golden age; the majority of the population were terrified they might succeed. As a result the war was bitter to the point of genocide. Colonies were bombarded with asteroids or nuclear weapons and finally the homeworld was destroyed.

The remaining colonies battled one another to extinction as the worshippers countered their enemies' superior resources with desperate fanaticism. The worshippers routinely made use of weaponry designed to disrupt technology, even if it had side effects that harmed the

user. Their civilisation was all but exterminated by the Imperial Year 500, with only a single colony remaining. The population was too small to be viable, resulting in genetic disorders and in-breeding, and the last colony has been in slow decline ever since.

Around 200 years ago an independent vessel from one of the human worlds in the Far Side of Nowhere region made contact with these degenerate remnants as the result of a misjump. After a period of great suspicion they received assistance with their vessel and rewarded the Firbolg rather poorly for it. The crew stole the remaining artefacts from Oyskrusk's expedition and fled homeward, suffering another misjump on the way. The wreck of their vessel was eventually found by a ship out of Rowdlin's Port and the artefacts bought by Rainer.

The Firbolg naturally attempted to seek out those who had insulted their gods and stolen the relics. Even at the cost of accelerating their final decline they threw all their resources into building vessels to track and reclaim their treasures. It was a huge and hopeless task, resulting in random attacks on exploration vessels and the eventual loss of most ships. The relics were never found.

Today, the remaining colony of this once powerful Firbolg culture is in a desperate state. A few thousand inbred Firbolg still live there, struggling to stave off the end and appease their vanished gods. They lack the resources to build more ships or even maintain their technology. They could be saved, perhaps, by benevolent starfarers who knew where to find other Firbolg with a healthy gene pool. Of course, this would mean overcoming their hostility towards anyone who does not follow their religion or might be connected with the thieves. *Deepnight Revelation* would also have to go out of her way to find this remnant colony, delaying its own mission. If the Travellers were to do this they might even find the remains of the Firbolg starfarers' culture – bombarded planets, nuked cities and wrecked starships. It is possible that there are other survivors or that the Travellers might encounter a world whose civilisation has been thrown back to the stone age or wiped out entirely. Perhaps they will make the connection, perhaps not.

For now, the Travellers are concerned with the Firbolg who reached the Far Side of Nowhere region. One particularly determined crew, led by a zealot who was certain she knew where the relics had been taken, reached the area some 20 years ago. This was probably the worshippers' last functional starship. Had it been in better condition it could have overcome the armed exploration ship it encountered but instead both vessels were destroyed. The irony of the situation was that the exploration ship was from the Dual Alliance, crewed by humans and Droyne working together.

Both ships were crippled and forced to crash-land on a nearby moon, which was habitable. The Dual Alliance ship was completely destroyed but most of the crew reached the surface in escape pods. The Firbolg vessel hit the ground hard and broke up but some of the crew also survived along with those who were aboard small fighters. These had to land or were lost when their fuel ran out.

In the meantime, the Firbolg began hunting down the Dual Alliance survivors and finally realised they faced an alliance of Droyne and what were apparently Firbolg. Face to face with her gods, more or less, the Firbolg captain may have been enraged that the gods had spurned her people and favoured others or might have tried to give worship. Either way, a final battle took place in the alien forest between the two wrecks, leaving just a handful of Firbolg alive. The survivors made a life for themselves as best they could, continuing to pray for a miracle.

Six years ago a ship out of Rowdlin's Port entered the system and salvaged a fighter the crew found floating in orbit over a habitable gas giant moon. Low on supplies, the crew decided to head home and sell their find. They returned to the system later, seeking more valuable salvage but fell victim to a trap laid by the surviving Firbolg. Until now their fate was unknown; just one more intrepid salvage crew lost to misadventure.

THE CARNDLESS SYSTEM

The star system (correctly) thought to be the origin point of the wrecked craft is designated Carndless in the local navigational databases. It is not listed as being inhabited and data is minimal. All that is recorded is that the system has two gas giants and a planetoid belt plus a water world and multiple terrestrial planets. All of this is correct but it does not convey a lot of information.

The system's binary stars orbit one another quite closely, creating a wide 'hot' zone. The innermost terrestrial planet has an eccentric and highly elliptical orbit that takes it deep into the hot zone for a short time then out beyond the gas giants at its most distant point. Conditions vary from extremely hot to slightly too cool for life, making the evolution of complex creatures impossible. Apart from a few basic life forms on the seabed this world is lifeless. The remainder of the system contains several modest sized terrestrial planets with unbreathable atmospheres and a sparse planetoid belt, and at first glance there appears to be no prospect of a habitable world. However, one of the moons of Carndless 2 has conditions suitable for humans or similar creatures.

CARNDLESS PRIMARY (M6 Star)

CARNDLESS COMPANION (M8 Star)

Carndless 1	(X78A000-0)
Carndless 2	(Large Gas Giant)
Carndless 3	(Small Gas Giant)
Carndless 4	(X520111-0)
Carndless 5	(X2A1000-0)
Carndless 6	(X8A1000-0)
Carndless 7	(X82000-0)
Carndless 8	(X5A0000-0)
Carndless 9	(X000000-0)
Carndless 10	(X3A000-0)

Carndless 2 is a large gas giant with an impressive set of rings and at least 70 moons, the largest having a standard atmosphere and plenty of surface water. Initial sensor readings indicate there is oxygen in the atmosphere and that surface temperature is about right for water. On closer approach the planet can be seen to be green and blue, and finally the ship's sensors will be able to resolve extensive forests covering much of the land mass. There are no power signatures, however.

Conditions on the moon – temporarily designated C2A (Carndless 2 Alpha) are suitable for habitation. Temperature is somewhat variable due to the moon's orbit around a body orbiting two others but C2A has a tolerable shirtsleeves environment most of the time. Surface gravity is 0.93gs.

Approaching C2A

As *Deepnight Revelation* approaches C2A, it becomes apparent there is metallic debris in orbit and on the surface. There are two obvious crash sites. One was catastrophic; little remains of the vessel. Identifying it would require a full investigation of the impact site and surrounding area. The other is an obviously alien vessel, broken into segments due to a very heavy but apparently survivable landing. Images of the surviving components can be manipulated to give an impression of the ship's original configuration. This does not match any known design but is reminiscent of the ship used by Oyskrusk and his expedition. The wreck appears to be deserted and has no power signature. Both wrecks have been in place for some time; vegetation has grown over them in many places.

There is another craft landed nearby, a Torlex class vessel, apparently intact but unpowered and surrounded by a heavy cage of girders and narrower metal bars. The obvious (and partially correct) reason for this is to permit personnel to conduct repairs on the ship under primitive conditions. This does not explain the lighter bars and wires that will become apparent only when the vessel is approached. The reason for these is to

create a large faraday cage, protecting the craft from an electromagnetic pulse, although the Travellers will probably not realise this until too late.

The landed ship does not respond to any attempt at communication and there do not appear to be signs of life around it. Thermal scans of the surrounding forest may indicate the presence of human-sized creatures but there is a lot of foliage that prevents an accurate reading. There is sufficient space near the downed ship to land a small craft or possibly more than one. If the Travellers do not make a landing, nothing happens until they attempt to approach overland. This means slogging through the forest for some distance from the nearest clearing. If the Travellers choose to do so the Firbolg will set up an ambush along the route, hoping to seize the grounded craft once the crew are eliminated. If the Travellers approach to land, however, the Firbolg have a surprise waiting for them.

The Ambush

Ideally the Firbolg do not want to spring their ambush until the Travellers' craft is on the ground and opened up, but they will settle for disabling it and getting inside another way. Their means to an end is a colossal electromagnetic pulse generator they have built inside the wreck of their own ship. This device uses an explosive charge to send a steel block hurtling through a large coil connected to the sections of the hull, causing the wreck's structure to emit a powerful pulse.

Even at orbital distance this will be sufficient to white out *Deepnight Revelation's* sensors for a short time and cause secondary problems. Rectifying these is mainly a matter of rebooting the systems, although the Travellers may not be aware that little damage has been done. A proper systems check is in order before undertaking manoeuvres, just in case a control or drive fault causes the ship to go off course. Such a check is a routine matter and will not show any major problems but the Travellers may be inclined to be cautious until it is completed. Crewmembers will certainly urge caution – going straight to full power just after an EMP has had unknown effects on the ship could result in plunging into the atmosphere of C2A. Thus events on-planet will begin unfolding whilst the crew in orbit have their own problems.

The effect on craft close to the pulse is much greater. All unshielded electronic systems would normally be destroyed by the pulse. However, the hull of the craft is sufficient to protect its systems and any devices within. This does not prevent most systems from being flatlined for a time, which causes additional complications. If the Travellers are airborne at the time their craft will crash. It is possible to mitigate this with a quick response by



the pilot. Emergency control pathways and regulators for the fusion plant are heavily shielded aboard most vessels, enabling a pilot who suddenly loses all other systems to make a controlled crash-landing.

Crash-landing the craft makes use of gravitational induction in the craft's lifters, using the movement of the lifters through the moon's gravitational field to induce a little current and allow a last-second deceleration or course correction. In short, the pilot cannot keep his craft from striking the ground but has some choice regarding what it hits and how hard. A Difficult (10+) Pilot check is required to land without damaging the craft or anyone inside. Each point of negative Effect inflicts one point of damage on the craft and 1D of damage on anyone inside. This is reduced by 1D if the Traveller is braced, perhaps due to grabbing something and by 2D for anyone strapped into a proper crew seat or impact frame.

Once on the ground the craft is shut down. Emergency reactor systems do nothing more than prevent the fusion plant from running wild, although there are heavily shielded shutdown controls if this is deemed necessary. Emergency batteries are also well shielded but they cannot power major systems. The Travellers have light, life support and power to control consoles once these are rebooted but little more than that.

Getting full power back on will take at least several minutes, assuming the Travellers ignore all the usual systems checks and concentrate on getting airborne.

A proper flight-safety check will take hours. In the meantime, the Travellers will come under attack if they are outside the craft and the craft itself will be assaulted if they remain inside. The first attackers to appear are armed with hand weapons only; machetes, short spears made from a ship's structural members and the like. There are a total of eight of these who will be supported after a few moments by two more. These are armed with energy weapons of the same design as the one in Rainer's collection (see page 68). The weapons were stored in a heavily shielded container and are fully functional, whereas energy weapons possessed by the Travellers will not be.

Some of the attackers wear a bandolier of what appear to be pipe bombs. They are in fact incendiary devices that can be used in combat but this is not their primary purpose. If emplaced by jabbing one end into the ground these devices can be used as cutting torches to damage a craft hull. They are not very effective in this role but they are what the Firbolg have. Enough of them will eventually burn a hole in a small craft's hull. If thrown, the device produces a short jet of intensely hot gas, which will send it spinning randomly about the combat area for the next 1D combat rounds. Anyone within two metres of the shower of hot metal sparks suffers 1D damage. The hot gas jet will do 6D damage if it hits anyone directly but this is unlikely. A Traveller threatened by such a device can make an Average (8+) Athletics (dexterity) check to predict its erratic movements and get out of the way.

The Firbolg have one purpose; to eliminate the crew and seize the craft. They do not respond to requests to parlay or calls to surrender, although they will break off their assault once half of them are down. There are only 10 of them, all long past their prime, and whilst they are fanatical and desperate they can be scared off. However, they will still not surrender. Instead they will hide and try to ambush the Travellers or sneak into their craft.

Aftermath

Once the Firbolg have been defeated the Travellers can start piecing together why they were here on C2A and what happened to the other ships that arrived. The crew of the Torlex are all dead but the ship has very minor damage. It does need a new set of control electronics for its lifters and drive and some components for both systems, as these were burned out by an EMP device similar to the one used against the Travellers. Had the Firbolg been able to salvage these items they would have finally escaped from C2A and continued their journey.

The Firbolg were living in one of the more intact parts of their ship, scavenging necessary items from the rest of the vessel. This has left some sections devoid of their original contents. One of the larger emptied areas has been turned into a temple. There are a number of religious items that were obviously created in a technological society and many more that have been locally made. These include statues, some life-size, depicting figures from the Firbolg religion. All of the god-figures are depicted as Droyne, whilst those receiving gifts or giving worship are Firbolg. The largest statue shows a Droyne leader holding an orb in one hand and a device of some kind in the other. The Travellers have seen these very objects in Rainer's collection. Across the base of the statue is written – in Oynprith – the name Oyskrusk.

The temple is unmistakably dedicated to the worship of Oyskrusk and his crew. The Travellers will realise that there is simply no way the Firbolg could have remembered their names and likenesses over 300,000 years – no matter how devout they were. This in turn implies that the Firbolg learned the names of their 'gods' from some kind of record. An examination of the religious objects in the temple suggests the orb was some kind of data storage device and the Firbolg were able to access it. An inscription appears in several places, more commonly than any other phrase. It is in Oynprith but appears to be a string of nonsense words.

The phrase is, in fact, nonsense but has a strange effect on anyone who is sensitive to the carvings left behind by Oyskrusk's expedition. The phrase must be spoken correctly but this is not a problem for anyone

who speaks the language as Oynprith has not changed throughout the centuries. The sensitive does not get a vision in this case but feels disorientated and more than a little dizzy. If the sensitive is within a few metres of the orb, they will gain access to the data that survives within it. There is no way to test this without returning to Rowdlin's Port, however.

It would not be hard to pick up enough samples to prove to Rainer that he was right and that there is plenty to salvage on C2A. The Travellers can bring a fair amount back with them but digging the Firbolg ship out of the ground and loading it aboard another vessel would be a lengthy undertaking. The Travellers never agreed to do any such thing and there is no need to try. Rainer will be delighted with a collection of samples and has no shortage of vessels available to collect his find.

The downed Torlex ship is legitimate salvage for the Travellers if they want it. Rainer does not know it is there and did not factor it into his calculations. All the ship needs is some repairs that can be handled aboard *Deepnight Revelation* to return it to working condition, at which point it can be put into service or sold. The Travellers are unlikely to find the bodies of the crew but at least they can make a record of what finally happened to them, if they care to do so. There may be family members or friends still wondering what happened to the crew and the ship is still on the 'missing' list. Closing the book on the vessel does not benefit the Travellers in any material way but it will feel right to them and their crew. Every spacer knows of someone who went missing and the questions that are still asked years later. Submitting details of the find into the public record is an act of kindness and a gesture of siblinghood among those who make their living in space.

RETURN TO ROWDLIN'S PORT

Rainer will be eager for news of what the Travellers found and will be extremely pleased with samples of the Firbolg ship. If the Travellers fill him in on what they know about its origins and fate, this adds value in his eyes. He will sell his restricted items to the Travellers and will value the find at 20% of the cash price of each item the Travellers want to buy. He can be bargained up to 50% of the value without great difficulty and possibly a bit more if the Travellers make an effort.

However, Rainer is not willing to part with his special collection. The Travellers will probably not be all that interested in the energy rifle but they are likely to want the two Droyne devices. This is a problem since Rainer will not part with them for any amount of money. The Travellers

might decide to take them by force, which will lead to an escalating fight. An attack on someone as powerful as Rainer is an attack on the city-state itself as far as the leaders are concerned. They have their differences but will band together against outside aggression.

If it comes to a straight fight, the locals do not really stand a chance. They have a few surface-to-orbit missiles in concealed launch pits outside the city and a handful of armed craft that cannot survive for more than a few seconds against *Deepnight Revelation*. On the ground they have security personnel with small arms and perhaps a handful of light support weapons. The Travellers easily outgun this entire planetary population. That does not mean they will not take casualties, however, and will certainly have to inflict some. The crew will defend themselves but are likely to be upset at having to fight what were initially friendly locals, especially if this was made necessary by thievery. Ex-naval personnel used to hunt planetary raiders for living – becoming one does not sit well with them.

Stealth is an option. Rainer has a TL11 security system and some guards. To the people of Rowdlin's Port this is a very effective security arrangement but the Travellers can break into the system and spoof it or shut it down without effort. Someone will still have to sneak into the compound and get the items but Rainer's guards are rather complacent. They are used to the automated system doing routine 'eyes and ears' work for them, better than they could do themselves and are not likely to be alert. Deception could also work. The Travellers might manage to bluff the security people or Rainer himself into letting them remove the objects but if they are not returned Rainer will naturally become hostile. Even if the theft is not observed, it will be obvious who has taken Rainer's treasures and he will try to act against them.

The simplest option is to ask if the Travellers can study the objects. Rainer might not normally be willing to let them borrow his treasures but in the excitement of the Travellers' return he will get carried away. He still has conditions, which amount to him getting to come aboard *Deepnight Revelation* for a good look around and to be present for at least some of the investigation. He also wants a complete copy of the Travellers' findings.

The objects could be copied easily enough, especially if the Travellers are able to analyse them in a proper lab. Copies will be inert, of course, but the originals have never been functional so Rainer would not know the difference. A perfect copy would require some alloys as used by the Ancients or exotic materials to fake them but one that will fool Rainer for the foreseeable future

can be made from more readily available materials. If the switch is to be made in front of Rainer the Travellers will need to be clever but he is keen to see the whole ship and can easily be distracted.

Analysis of the two devices indicates they are indeed from Oyskrusk's ship. The Travellers may have to explain to Rainer who the Ancients were in order for their findings to be meaningful. Without activating the orb the Travellers may or may not be able to piece together how they came to be here. They know Oyskrusk's crew interacted with various species along the way, not always successfully, and that the Firbolg worshipped these objects as part of a religion based around Oyskrusk and his followers. Details will not be available unless the Travellers have managed to access the orb. If they have not, all they can tell Rainer is that these are devices used by the Ancients but are apparently no longer functional. The Travellers might choose to say this anyway, especially if they have stolen the real ones and left copies in their place.

The Orb

The orb is a data recording device. It is psionically controlled and powered, needing no energy source of its own. The mechanism for data storage is far beyond the Travellers' comprehension but the capacity of the device is enormous. Unfortunately it is badly degraded after thousands of years in the hands of primitive Firbolg.

If activated by a sensitive or a psionic Traveller the device draws power by psionic transfer. A trained psionic can control this; once they get used to the process it is not unpleasant. One PSI point is used every hour the orb is activated. A sensitive cannot control the transfer, which drains them physically and mentally in a painful manner, suffering one point from END or STR (chosen randomly) for ever 2D minutes of use and developing a severe headache into the bargain. This becomes less painful over time as the Traveller gets used to the process.

A Traveller cannot get the device to record. This capability was lost due to degradation over time. Records are also very patchy, although practice will allow operators to get more out of them. The device functions in a similar manner to the carvings the Travellers are already familiar with but uses recorded images placed there by the original user rather than triggered imagination. Thus a user will be seeing through the eyes of the orb's operator, usually Oyskrusk himself.

There are many images from the voyage, usually in short and jerky fragments. The Travellers may be able to use these to gain insight into events that have puzzled them up to now. They can witness expeditions to the

surface of worlds or experiments the crew undertook, a desperate fight to save the ship from infestation by the Deepnight Entity and the disaster that overcame scientist Tyovask. Technical data cannot be discerned, only the course of events.

The Travellers will learn how Oyskrusk and his crew attempted to befriend a tribe of primitive Firbolg and ended up triggering a revolution. The recording device was left behind in the scramble and after a significant blank the recordings begin again. From this point on the device is being used by a psionic or sensitive Firbolg. Images are intermittent but the Travellers should be able to piece together a history of veneration and conflict.

Finally, the device records the arrival of a ship from the stars. The user is very excited, apparently believing the gods have come back. Humans emerge from the newly-arrived ship, which can be recognised as the forerunner of a modern design used in the Far Side of Nowhere. The last recording on the device is of a crewmember from that ship holding the orb and a smoking pistol. The orb's user is looking up at them, then down at the wound in her chest. She must have uploaded her final memories as she died, preserving forever a record of the crewmember turning away to return to his ship.

The Travellers can go back and forth through the images, searching through years of surviving records. As already noted they cannot retrieve technical or scientific information as none is recorded on the device but they can see what Oyskrusk and his crew saw, or watch Firbolg civilisation emerge and collapse several times before they finally put together starships in the image of those their gods used and set out to find them.

The Scientific Device

This device is also psionically triggered and can be used by a sensitive at the same cost as the orb. It must be attuned, which takes some practice but thereafter can be used at will. Only one Traveller can be attuned to the device at a time.

Most of the functions this device once provided have degraded to the point of uselessness but it does retain three useful capabilities. The first allows the user to modify their perceptions so they can 'see' more of the electromagnetic spectrum. This is akin to the function of PRIS goggles used by engineers but can be done at will – at the price of a headache and eyestrain. Using this capability the Traveller can visually detect radio-frequency emissions, radiation leaks and even cosmic rays. The Traveller does not gain the ability to analyse these emissions beyond an impression of their type and intensity.

The second function is defensive. The device can protect the user against harmful radiation and emissions, although this comes at a price. At any time the Traveller is exposed to an energy attack – whether by direct contact such as grabbing a live wire or by radiation such as a laser or reactor leak – the device creates a field to nullify the effect. One point of STR or END (determined randomly) is temporarily drained from the Traveller in return for protection from 1D of damage or 25 rads. Thus an electric shock that would cause the Traveller 4D damage is nullified at the cost of four points from STR, END or a mixture of both. Drained points return at the rate of one per six hours of light activity or three hours of rest.

The device also does one other very specific thing. When carried by an attuned user it warns of the presence of a Deepnight entity. This is not biological detection; the device does not scan for particles or cells. What it does is detect the neurological signals from an infected creature or a cluster. The alarm signal takes the form of a feeling of discomfort that grows into severe pain depending on the strength of the neurological signal and its proximity. A fully psionic user could control this; a sensitive cannot. Thus a newly infected person with only a little entity nerve tissue would provoke an uneasy reaction; being within 10 metres of a major cluster would be agony.

MOVING ON

The Travellers could stay at Rowdlin's Port for some time, perhaps learning to speak Kenvab and becoming part of the political scene for a time. However, at some point they will need to move on. The artefacts from Rainer's collection may be useful – if the Travellers found a way to obtain them – and even a cursory look at the data recorded on the orb will give some clues about events in the distant past.

The Travellers may decide to find the Firbolg survivors and might even return their relics. This is unlikely, however, as it would require an extensive search off the path of the expedition. If they did undertake such a search the Travellers would find several bombarded worlds with a population blasted back to the stone age before they reached the surviving colony. There is an adventure to be had in that direction but one best left to the Referee. Most crews will want to push on to their final destination, perhaps assisted by the items they have found.

OPPOSITION

In this adventure the Travellers are likely to come up against fanatical Firbolg and perhaps human guards.

ROWDLIN'S PORT SECURITY OPERATIVE

STR 8 DEX 6 END 8 INT 7 EDU 5 SOC 6

Skills: Gun Combat (slug) 1, Investigate 1, Melee (bludgeon) 1, Persuade 1

Weapons: Baton (2D), Autopistol (3D-3), Submachinegun (3D-3, Auto 3)

FIRBOLG FANATIC

These Firbolg are adapted to a higher-gravity world than the one they currently occupy. Their home colony was dying when they left aboard its last starship, following a mystic leader who was certain she knew where the relics stolen from them are located. Despite years stuck on this moon the crew are still single-minded about their mission – perhaps more so than before – and will stop at nothing to obtain components they need to cobble together a vessel to continue the search.

STR 7 DEX 8 END 5 INT 8 EDU 7 SOC 7

Skills: Gun Combat (energy) 1, Melee (blade) 1, Recon 1, Survival 1

Weapons: Machete (2D) or Spear (2D), possible Particle Rifle (1D/3D, Bulky, Radiation)

FIRBOLG LEADER

The leader of this group is a devout worshipper of 'the gods who came to us and will come again'. She is fanatical in her beliefs and also her hatred for those who stole the relics. This translates to a general antipathy towards anyone not from her homeworld. She is not stupid but possesses a single-minded devotion to her task that supplants all other considerations. Despite this, it is just possible the Travellers might be able to persuade her to talk. Whether they can help with her mission, or are willing to do so, is of course up to them.

The Referee should note that Rainer is unlikely to part with the relics and whilst the weapon is of no consequence to the leader, she would want both other items from Oyskrusk's expedition. Cooperation is thus extremely unlikely but the Travellers might still go down that route. If so, they will have to find a way to get the relics from Rainer and convey the survivors of the Firbolg

crew back to their dying world. It is far more likely that the Firbolg leader will be an enemy to the death.

The leader is absolutely convinced she has received divine inspiration about the location of the stolen relics and her ship was headed in the right direction. Whether this was by sheer chance, the result of some clue found along the way or actual intervention is up to the Referee. The leader and her followers are sincere believers in a faith that inspired their ancestors to more or less wipe out their own species. There is nothing she will not do to retrieve the treasures and bring them home to her people, at which point she knows (whether she is right or not is irrelevant, she *knows*) the gods will return and reward her people for their devotion.

STR 5 DEX 9 END 4 INT 10 EDU 10 SOC 11

Skills: Melee (blade) 1, Persuade 5, Survival 1

Weapons: Machete (2D)

Firbolg Energy Rifle: The energy rifles used by the Firbolg are of an unusual design, combining a laser and a handheld particle accelerator into something in between a combat rifle and a support weapon. Bulky and heavy, they rapidly use up their power supply. They are, however, quite powerful. The weapon operates in two stages. The first is a laser pulse that does a mere 1D damage and ionises a path through the atmosphere. The second stage is triggered only if the laser pulse hits something within the particle weapon's maximum effective range of 100 metres. This does not have to be the intended target; any return from hit within 100 metres instantly triggers the second stage. This delivers an additional 3D damage to the target. Armour is counted separately against each stage.

One side-effect of the particle accelerator function is an ionisation flash along the path of the beam. This will cause 1D damage to anyone within two metres each side of the weapon's path. The user also gains 1D rads of radiation exposure every time the particle accelerator fires. The power pack only holds enough energy for 12 shots and takes several hours to recharge. There is one additional advantage – or possibly disadvantage – to this weapon; the electrical field generated by the particle burst will swamp communications and cause unshielded electronics to malfunction. Battle dress or robotic equipment may go out of control if hit. The handler or wearer must make an Average (8+) check to avoid this. If the check is failed, the equipment behaves randomly for a number of rounds equal to the negative Effect.

WEAPON	TL	RANGE	DAMAGE	KG	COST	MAGAZINE	POWER PACK COST	TRAITS
Firbolg Energy Rifle	12	500 (100)	1D/3D	12	Cr150000	12	Cr45000	Bulky, Radiation

ADVENTURE: DREAMING IN REAL TIME

This adventure can take place at any point in the expedition but requires a starfaring civilisation within feasible misjump range. The default assumption is that the vessel at the heart of this adventure was launched from the Commonwealth, in the Far Side of Nowhere. It could alternatively be a Firbolg ship from a spacefaring culture or belong to some other species entirely. If the Referee decides the vessel was launched by a non-human race, details about the vessel will have to be modified accordingly.

The adventure can take place when the Travellers enter any system. They detect a large vessel, which has apparently just emerged from jumpspace. Upon closer inspection this ship turns out to be much larger than *Deepnight Revelation*, but of lower technology. Its function is not immediately apparent but it is obvious the ship is in distress. As the Travellers investigate they will discover how and why the ship came to be in this state.

THE SEEDER SHIP

The vessel is a 'seeder ship', designed for long-range colonisation using only the most basic jump drive technology. It carries a large number of colonists in cryogenic suspension along with their equipment and in addition has huge hydroponics bays. These serve a dual purpose; they support the crew during the long transit to the destination world and carry crops that can be transplanted to the new home. The vessel itself is designed to land and be converted into the centrepiece of a new colony.

Ships of this sort are used for long-range colonisation, at least by the standards of the culture that launched them. Capable of only one-parsec jumps the vessel carries enough fuel to make three jumps before needing to refuel and is intended to plod along at 2–3 parsecs per month for up to five years. This becomes increasingly risky as the mission goes on. Typically a ship will journey for perhaps two years then begin looking for a suitable world to colonise. The balance between accepting a sub-optimal colonisation world and risking several more jumps must be carefully considered but a ship that finds a suitable world within three years

should be in little danger. Unfortunately for this vessel, 'should' is not a guarantee of safety.

The vessel is constructed as a more or less cylindrical primary hull, with three breakaway sections. These are located at 120° angles around the main hull, each with attachments at two primary structural members. The breakaway sections are also cylindrical, more or less, to reduce drag when entering atmosphere or undertaking gas giant refuelling. The central unit could, in theory, drop one seeder segment off at each of three different destinations then move between them to maintain contact until the ship wore out. Alternatively, it can act as a fourth seeder unit either at a different location or centrally between three ready-made colonies on the same world.

The central hull contains jump drives and fuel for them. Its jump performance is based on the total tonnage of the vessel with all three seeder units attached. For manoeuvre, the drives of the seeder segments are slaved to the main hull's systems. Each component of the ship can operate independently or contribute to the whole, although controls for the seeder units are minimal. These are intended to make one separate descent, to their landing point and never fly again.

The central hull section is conventionally laid out with the drives, power plant and fuel located aft and command spaces forward. Between the two is an accommodation area for the crew, which includes a large medical staff to take care of the low berth passengers. The large biosphere area is usually set up with a mix of crops and temperate flora, providing a ready-made ecosystem to be transplanted upon arrival. Standard practice is to plant a portion of the biosphere contents whilst maintaining strict anti-contamination policies. If a blight or unexpected problem emerges the biosphere still has a reserve of healthy plants to provide food and grow a second wave of flora to be transplanted.

Drives, fuel capacity and the tonnage required to support the breakaway sections are calculated based on a fully loaded configuration, with the drives and power plants of the three seeder segments augmenting that of the main hull. Normally these are landed separately but



close enough to one another to allow mutual support. The main hull cannot land with the seeder segments attached and must jettison the structural members that connect the seeder segments to the main hull. These can be left attached if the ship is making a short trip to deliver its seeder segments but at the end of a one-way mission the structural members are soft-landed and dismantled to provide additional materials.

Seeder Segment

Each seeder segment is laid out in similar fashion, with a flat ventral surface and rounded outer surfaces. In flight, the flat side faces the parent vessel and access between the two is by way of a pair of heavy structural members supporting personnel access corridors, piping and wiring. These protrude a short way into the seeder segment, entering an access chamber that remains part of the segment when it detaches. When detached, the segment is designed to land on its ventral surface, with the access chambers allowing personnel and vehicle movement out of the vessel at ground level. The access/attachment points roughly divide the vessel up into thirds.

The area between the access chambers on the lowest deck of the segment – in other words, the one closest to the ventral surface – is largely taken up with cargo space and storage. It is possible to move from one access point to the other without entering the rest of the ship. The remainder of the lowest deck is a mix of cargo space and manufacturing machinery.

The higher decks are dominated by the segment's biosphere components. Each segment has a main biosphere dedicated to cereal crops and two subsidiaries. One contains flora from a temperate area,

typically light woodlands or moorlands, and the other a specific region such as jungle, swamp or semi-desert. If all three segments land on a new world almost any environmental niche can be colonised with imported plants. If only one is present, essential food crops and temperate vegetation can still be introduced.

In addition, there are residential areas for the workers who tend the biospheres and more standard accommodation for the crew. These mostly look after the drives and power plant but segments have their own command staff and a pilot. Controls are minimal, intended only for a single landing. Medical personnel tend the sleeping colonists, in some cases rotating through periods on duty then several months in low berth.

Once the craft has landed, there is insufficient accommodation aboard the segment for the low berth colonists. The intent is that they would be woken in batches, briefed in the segment's facilities, then sent out to build a settlement around the grounded craft. Prefabricated buildings and construction equipment are carried and anything found necessary can be produced in the vessel's factories.

The first wave of activated colonists would be security, exploration and construction specialists, who would then be joined by other members of the expedition once a safe living space was ready. The segment is intended to remain at the centre of the colony, acting as an administrative complex and factory as well as supplying food and power to the new colony. The segment is designed to eventually be dismantled, with its systems and facilities being built into permanent structures within a new city.

FAR COLONY POSTULANT SEEDER SHIP

XX

TL9		TONS	COST (MC _R)
Hull	150,000 tons, Standard	—	7500
	Breakaway Sections (50,000 tons) x3	6,000	12000
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 2	7,500	375
M-Drive	Thrust 1	1,500	3000
Jump Drive	Jump-1	7,505	11257.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL9), Power: 100,000	10,000	10000
Fuel Tanks	J-1 x2, 20 weeks of operation	95,000	—
Bridge		60	1500
Computer	Core/40	—	45
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Single Turrets (pulse laser) x24	24	28.8
Systems	Armouries x100	100	25
	Medical Bays x25	100	50
	Workshops x60	60	9
	Briefing Rooms x25	100	12.5
	Libraries x10	40	40
	Training Facilities x60	120	24
	Biosphere	8,000	1600
Staterooms	Standard x350	1,400	175
	Low Berth x10,000	5,000	500
Common Area		2,000	200
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
Cargo		5,490	—
TOTAL: MC _R 48344.9			

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT,
ASTROGATOR, ENGINEERS
X175, MAINTENANCE X50,
MEDICS X35, GUNNERS X8,
ADMINISTRATORS X25,
OFFICERS X8

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Mcr4.028742/month

.....
PURCHASE COST
Mcr48344.9

75,000

HULL POINTS

POWER REQUIREMENTS

15,000

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

30,000

BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

30,000

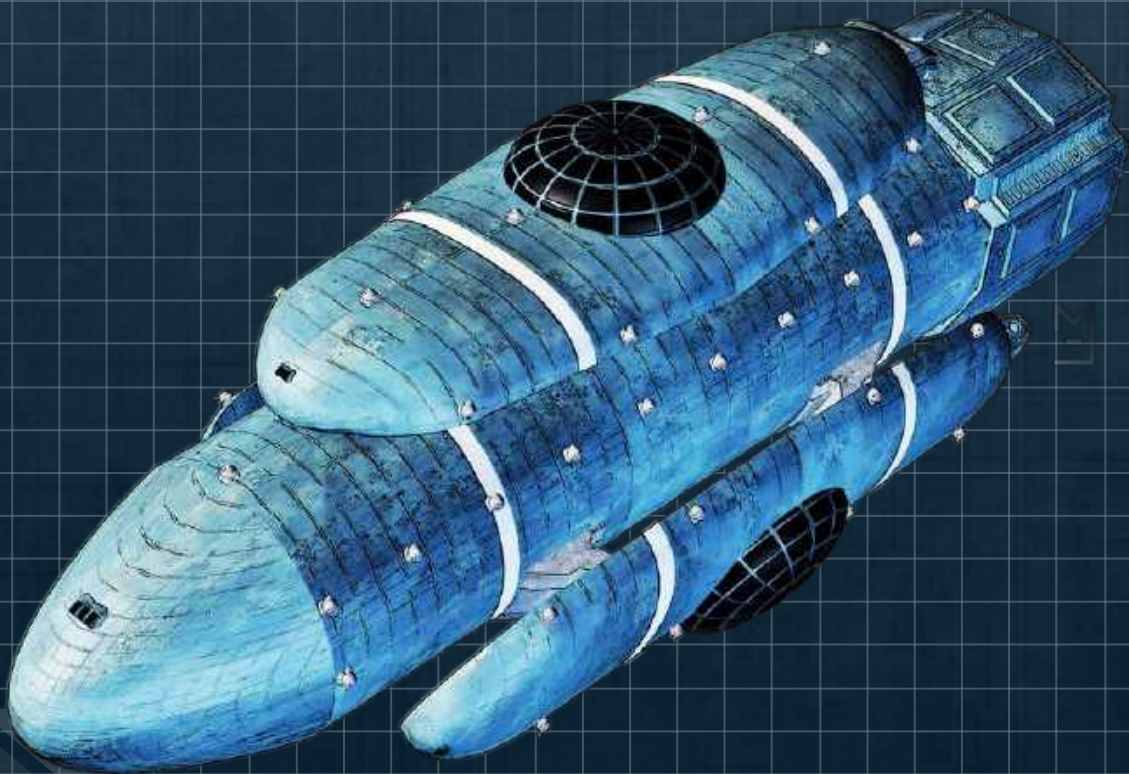
JUMP DRIVE

1

SENSORS

120

WEAPONS



LEGEND

1. Bridge & Sensors
2. Briefing Rooms
3. Biosphere
4. Power Plant
5. Single Turret
6. Armuories
7. Medical Bays
8. Staterooms
9. Common Area

1 SQUARE = 50 TONS

DECK 3

DECK 2

DECK 1

10. Training Facilities
11. Libraries
12. Low Berths
13. Jump Drive
14. Access to secondary Hull
15. Manoeuvre Drive
16. Workshops
17. Cargo Hold
18. Lift

SEEDER SEGMENT

XX

TL9		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	50,000 tons, Standard	—	2500
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 2	2,500	125
M-Drive	Thrust 1	500	1000
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power: 42,000	4,200	4200
Fuel Tanks	20 weeks of operation	2,100	—
Bridge	Dual Cockpit	2.5	0.015
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Basic	—	—
Weapons	Single Turrets (pulse laser) x12	12	14.4
Systems	Armouries x100	100	25
	Medical Bays x25	100	50
	Workshops x60	60	9
	Briefing Rooms x25	100	12.5
	Libraries x10	40	40
	Residential Zone, Low (capacity 500)	1,000	50
	Residential Zone, High (capacity 100)	600	150
	Manufacturing Plant, Basic (100 tons)	1,000	200
	Manufacturing Plant, Agricultural (200 tons)	4,000	2000
	Biosphere	20,000	4000
Staterooms	Standard x100	400	50
	Low Berths x5,000	2,500	250
Common Areas		4,000	400
Software	Manoeuvre/0	—	—
	Library	—	—
Cargo		6,785	—
TOTAL: MCr 15076.175			

CREW

CAPTAIN, PILOT, ENGINEERS
X50, MAINTENANCE X20,
MEDICS X15, GUNNERS
X4, ADMINISTRATORS
X10, OFFICERS X10,
MANUFACTURING/BIOSPHERE
WORKERS X440

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Mcr1.256348/month

PURCHASE COST
Mcr15076.175

25,000

HULL POINTS

POWER REQUIREMENTS

5,000

MANOEUVRE
DRIVE

10,000

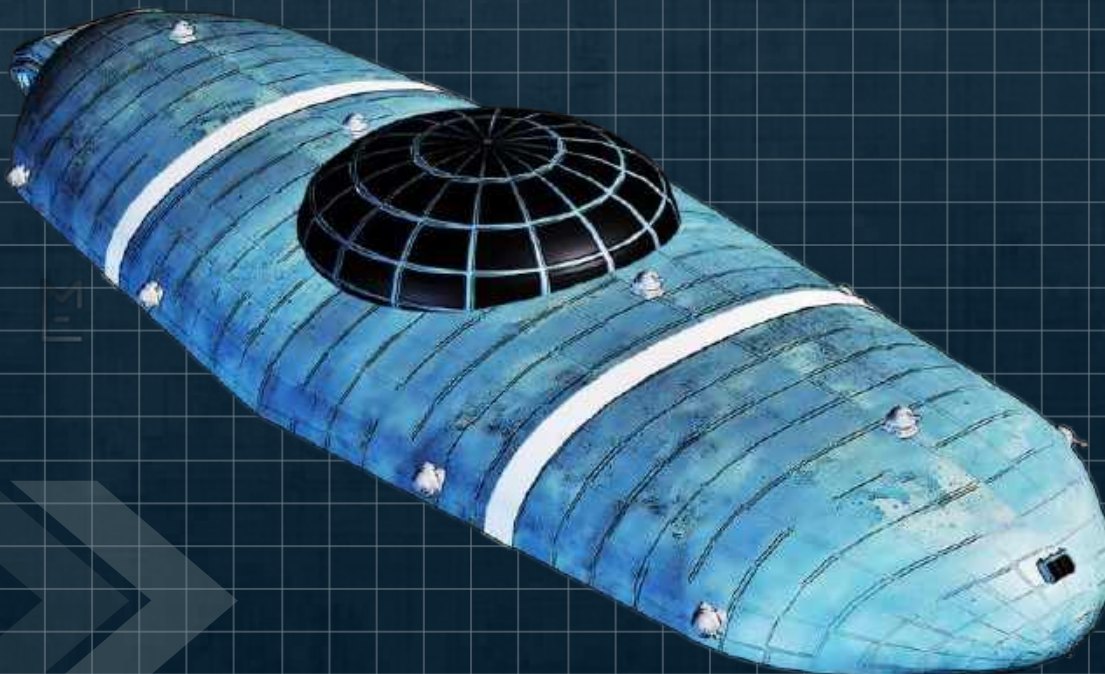
BASIC SHIP
SYSTEMS

60

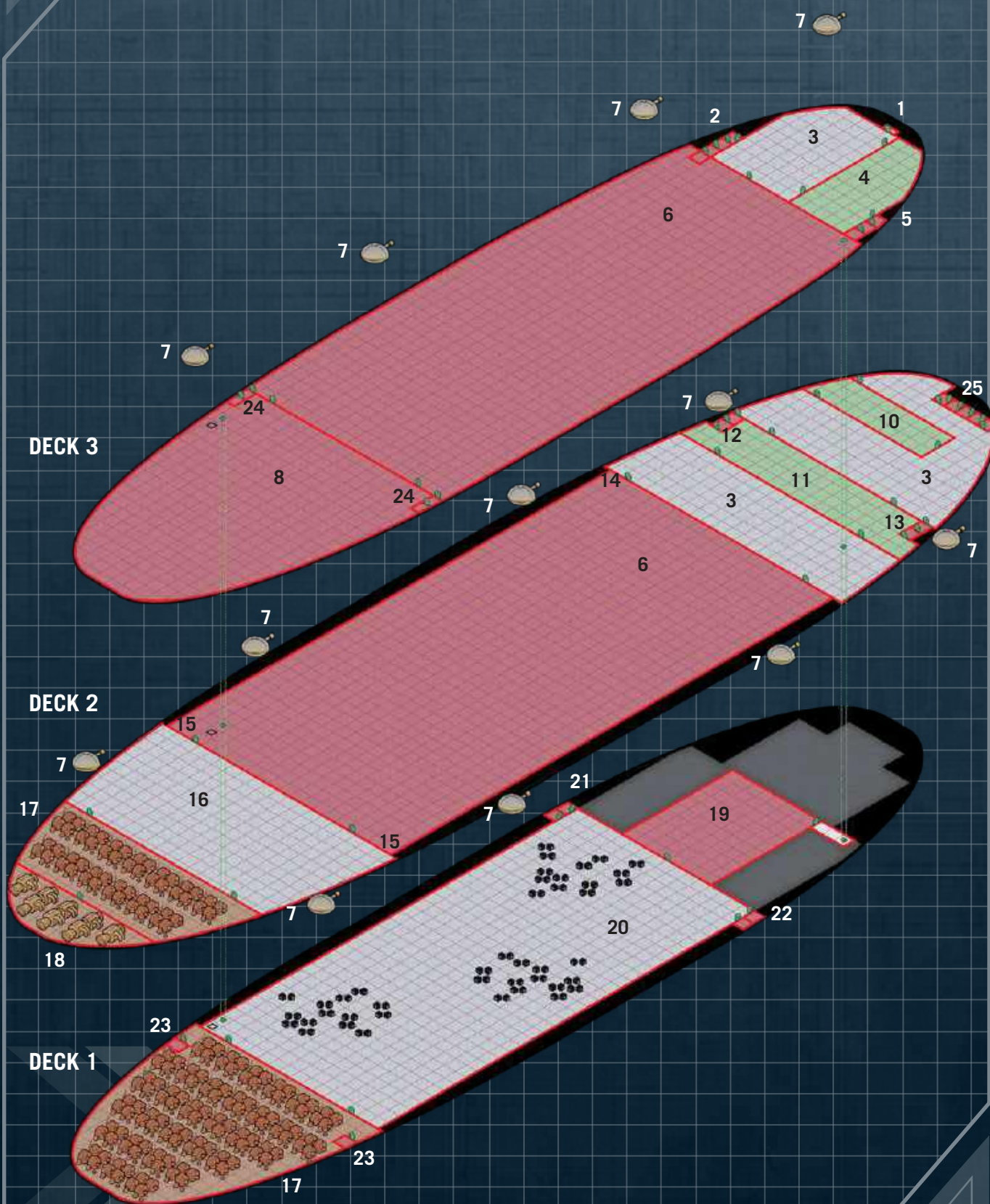
WEAPONS

LEGEND

1. Cockpit
2. Medical Bays, Libraries, Armouries, Briefing Rooms
3. Common Area
4. Residential Zone, High
5. Medical Bays, Armouries, Briefing Rooms
6. Biosphere
7. Single Turret
8. Manufacturing Plant, Agri.
9. Lift
10. Staterooms
11. Residential Zone, Low
12. Armouries, Libraries
13. Armouries, Medical Bays
14. Briefing Rooms
15. Armouries, Medical Bays
16. Low Berths
17. Power Plant
18. Manoeuvre Drive
19. Manufacturing Plant, Basic
20. Cargo Hold
21. Workshops, Armouries
22. Workshops, Briefing Rooms
23. Workshops
24. Medical Bays, Workshops
25. Armouries, Libraries,
Medical Bays, Briefing Rooms



1 SQUARE = 25 TONS



The large 'common areas' in each segment are designed to be used as marshalling and making-ready areas when a batch of colonists are woken. In the event that a contingent is woken but cannot deploy when expected, the common areas can serve as rather uncomfortable emergency accommodation. In the period between landing colonists on-planet and dismantling the segment these common areas will be used as shops, gyms and recreation areas whilst permanent facilities are set up.

THE FAR COLONY POSTULANT

The seeder ship's name translates into Anglic as *Far Colony Postulant*. She was launched from the world of Maine in the Commonwealth, in Imperial Year 832. Her mission was to travel beyond the known region and seek out a suitable world to colonise within a designated search area. A follow-up mission would track her progress by way of a trail of message buoys, establishing contact with the new colony and bringing in additional equipment. However, this was not due to occur for several years, during which time the new colony would have to rely on its own resources. Previous missions of this sort, albeit over a shorter distance, had been sufficiently successful that the concept was considered to be proven.

The early part of the mission went well enough. *Far Colony Postulant* made a series of jumps, many of them into deep space and left her home region far behind. She was beyond any hope of assistance when disaster struck. The first the crew knew of it was a set of strange readings from the jump drive, then reports of crewmembers being attacked in various parts of the ship. Teams sent to investigate found bodies or came back with casualties and injuries. Clearly something was stalking the ship and killing the crew.

As the days passed it was clear that *Far Colony Postulant* had suffered a misjump and a bad one. An erratic jump field allowed jumpspace to intrude upon the outer parts of the ship, causing damage to the seeder segments and within the main hull but the most serious intrusion took place at the forward end of the ship. A section of the main hull containing the bridge and command spaces was severed and fell away, coming into contact with the jump field. Instantly the command section was annihilated along with the ship's senior officers.

More jumpspace intrusions occurred after this but none on such a large scale. The remainder of the ship survived, largely due to the efforts of the engineering officer and her team. They were able to stabilise the

jump field around the remainder of the vessel and began trying to remove colonists from the most threatened parts of the ship.

Attacks on crewmembers continued and the survivors made the obvious connection; something hostile from jumpspace had entered their vessel. It was a terrifying thought; a nightmare from the wildest of spacers' tales. The crew steeled themselves to face whatever threatened them and accelerated their programme of waking some of the colonists. Some, newly-wakened and crewmembers alike, descended rapidly into madness, hallucinating horrible monsters or attacking one another in a paranoid rage. Even as the killings continued the crew bravely searched the ship for some intruder, hoping to find and kill whatever was attacking their vessel.

The crew were looking in the wrong place. There was no intruder, no hideous jumpspace monster. Not as such, anyway. What had happened was in many ways worse. One of the colonists, a man named Jacob Enton, was a latent telepath of considerable potential power. A malfunction in the jump drive caused a chain of minor system failures and interrupted a routine monitoring process undertaken by the medical staff. For most subjects there was no effect; backup systems kept everyone safe. However, in Jacob Enton's case the incident caused a momentary interaction between his telepathic senses and the jumpspace surrounding the ship. Jacob Enton was heavily sedated and frozen almost to the point of zero brain activity, but still he began to dream.

Even slowed by the cryogenic process, Enton's brain was capable of significant activity. Confused and tumultuous images raced through his mind and whilst only moments passed for his body his brain experienced a lengthy ordeal in which it strove to comprehend what was happening. Trapped in a frozen body, Enton reached out with his mind. He had no control over his powers, just a desperate need to escape his personal hell. His flailing mind touched the jump drive and the field it produced, causing further disruption, before discovering it could make contact with other beings. Some were cold and dark, sleeping in their low berths. Some burned bright and hot. Enton clumsily reached out to those, unintentionally driving some to destructive rage. Others became paranoid and confused, convinced something was hunting them. The well-meaning efforts of the crew to find an intruder played to this fantasy, and soon paranoid individuals decided they had to kill or be killed.

Days passed in the ship as the disrupted jump drive ran wild. After 15 days in jump, *Far Colony Postulant* began to emerge. Her jump field was collapsing erratically, contacting parts of the ship and destroying them.

Here and there pockets of jumpspace formed inside the vessel, if only for an instant. The destruction was considerable but survivable. *Far Colony Postulant* was fortunate in many ways. An ordinary ship would have run out of fuel and been completely destroyed but she had enough for three jumps aboard. The misjump had devoured over half the fuel in her tanks but plenty remained. Had *Far Colony Postulant* made a normal emergence, she might have survived more or less intact.

However, as the jump field finally began to collapse, the section of the low berth arrays where Enton was located came into contact with a pocket of jumpspace. Hundreds died in the first instant and more as the pocket closed then re-opened several times before finally fizzling out. The medical staff remained at their posts despite the danger, crash-waking all the colonists they could and dragging them to safety. The rescue was a gallant thing, with other crewmembers rushing to help and even some newly-woken colonists stumbling back into the danger zone to drag others out. Hundreds were saved, among them Jacob Enton. Thus the heroism of those aboard caused the doom of *Far Colony Postulant*.

Jacob Enton's conscious mind awoke from its sedated cryogenic suspension amid scenes as chaotic and frightening as those of his telepathic nightmares. Still operating on a primal level and quite possibly already insane, Enton tried to bring the situation under control the only way he knew. Many of the rescuers and the colonists succumbed to his mind-shout, collapsing dead or unconscious. Others suffered mental damage that made them more susceptible to the effects of a misjump. Some were compelled to find and help Enton, instantly developing a loyalty that bordered upon fanatical worship.

At the same time, Enton's subconscious grappled with the jump field. His instinct was to try to control it, to protect himself and perhaps others. With no understanding of what he was trying to do, he succeeded only in distorting the field further. Up until that point, what was left of *Far Colony Postulant* might have made a clean emergence into normal space. Now, the laws of jumpspace and normal space began to vie for control over the ship. Aboard, it seemed that the jump field took weeks to collapse, causing an agonising entry into normal space that exposed everyone aboard to the effects of a bad misjump. To an outside observer, it would have appeared that *Far Colony Postulant* endured a series of emergences, appearing in the normal universe and then vanishing back into jumpspace, over and over again.

The duration between emergences grew longer each time and the apparent duration of each period of calm, spent in normal space, was also greater. Then the ship would

vanish from the normal universe and the madness would begin again. So it was for weeks aboard *Far Colony Postulant* and decades in the outside universe. The ship and crew were experiencing that instant where a vessel crosses the boundary from jump to normal space and simultaneously exists in both, dragged out into endless torment. They were entering an uninhabited system, with no-one to assist or even bear witness to their fate.

In the outside universe over 250 years have passed; to the survivors of *Far Colony Postulant* it has been a nightmarish few weeks. The ship has suffered additional damage during the emergence from jumpspace and is still experiencing jumpspace intrusions. Most of the occupants are dead and the rest are living in a hell of hallucinations caused by the interactions of Enton's mind and the collapsing jump field. When the Travellers arrive it seems that the ship has finally settled into normal space but this is not quite true. As the Travellers will find when they board *Far Colony Postulant*, her torment is not quite over.

Field-Collapse Resonance and Jump Bounce

Normally, emergence from jumpspace takes place over the course of a few seconds, with a longer pre-emergence phase and a short period in which the ship is said to 'settle' in normal space. The pre-emergence phase can be uncomfortable for some starfarers, causing headaches, nosebleeds and nausea in a small proportion. Emergence is disorientating for most, and highly unpleasant for a few, but the effects pass quickly. The settling phase is marked, for most people, by a rapid fading of the emergence discomfort. During this period the jump field has not quite dissipated and the ship is considered by laymen to be 'mostly in normal space but still partly in jump'. Jumpspace physicists cringe at this description but explaining what is really happening requires a great deal of advanced mathematics and explanation of several theories covering jump/normal space interactions.

Quite often, the jump field does not collapse cleanly. An uneven collapse is usually the result of a badly calibrated or maintained jump drive and magnifies the unpleasant effects on people. A perfectly calculated jump using a perfectly tuned drive should result in an emergence without any unpleasant effects on anyone but in practice this is not possible to achieve. Usually, however, the effects are mild and only the most susceptible are affected.

The usual effect of an uneven field collapse is a difference of nanoseconds or less between the first part of the ship emerging into normal space and the last. However, in some cases a resonance can occur, whereby parts of a collapsing jump field reinforce or nullify one

another in such a way that the emergence is particularly unpleasant. Minor damage can occur in extreme cases, due to a phenomenon labelled by spacers (and to the great annoyance of jumpspace scientists) 'jump bounce'. A jump bounce is effectively an emergence of part or all of the craft, near-instantaneous return to jumpspace and re-emergence. This can happen multiple times, producing the worst jump emergences a spacer can imagine but no lasting effects.

Far Colony Postulant is suffering the most extreme case of jump bounce ever recorded, due to resonance in the jump field caused by damage to the ship's drive and the intervention of Jacob Enton's subconscious. Rather than nanoseconds, the 'bounces' began at intervals of minutes inside the ship and decades outside it and as the field collapses these intervals have lengthened. As *Deepnight Revelation* approaches it seems that *Far Colony Postulant* has made its final bounce and has settled into normal space. However this is not quite the case.

THE SITUATION ABOARD

The situation aboard the seeder ship is desperate. There were 25,000 colonists aboard when the misjump began, all in low berths, plus the crew. Most are dead, either in their failed low berths or scattered around the ship. There are holes in some internal spaces, and breaches in the outer hull. Those still alive are in various states of mental distress. All are paranoid to a greater or lesser degree. For some this is due to mental illness caused by the horrors they have endured, while others have simply developed a paranoid mindset which has helped keep them alive.

There are biospheres and living quarters in all sections of the ship, although one of the seeder segments is badly damaged. Survivors have learned the best way to stay alive is to keep away from others, unless a bond of trust has been established. Small groups have emerged, based on mutual dependency, but everyone is at least wary – and often psychotically hostile – to outsiders.

With few exceptions, the survivors are feral and desperate. Some are beyond reason and will attempt to stalk and kill anyone from outside their immediate band or group. Others are unstable but can be reasoned with and a few – whilst frightened and unwilling to trust anyone – are still rational enough to function normally, at least most of the time.

Those Who Remain

In general, those left alive aboard *Far Colony Postulant* fall into distinct groups. The exact number of people, and the number in each group, is left up to the Referee. This allows the adventure to be tailored to the capabilities of the Travellers. However, it is not likely that more than a few dozen people will be active in each of the seeder segments and slightly more in the main hull. Out of 25,000 souls aboard at the beginning of the last jump, perhaps 300 or 400 are alive and active, with some others remaining helpless in the low berths.

Jacob Enton and his followers are the most dangerous people aboard *Far Colony Postulant*. Enton is now completely insane, tormented by hallucinations caused by mental contact with jumpspace. He is essentially dreaming in real time, unable to tell the difference between reality and hallucination, so able to cross the boundary between them. Enton is not malicious as such, but is so deranged that he cannot do anything but cause harm to the people around him.

Enton does not have a conscious agenda but is driven to try to get control over the ship and the physical world around him. This control can be manifested in many ways. At times Enton will be driven to disable systems that still have power, more or less at random. On other occasions he may kill people and for the same reason, making a thing stop functioning makes the world less complicated. If enough complications can be eliminated, Enton's mind may be able to take control of what is left. This compulsion is as strong as it is irrational.

In addition, Enton's contact with jumpspace has altered his perception. In his mind, the chaos of the intrusive jump field is normal and as it fades he feels a sense of loss. His subconscious is fighting to maintain the jump field, resulting in the present jump bounce. Enton's desperation increases as the last echoes of the field fade away and despite this meaning there is less 'noise' in his perceptions it does not improve his mental state. Quite the opposite, in fact. Enton is addicted to the noise and finds the silent world of normal space both frightening and unfathomable. He is capable of lucid words and actions but craves a return to jumpspace and will do anything to make it happen.

Enton's followers are swamped by his crude, untutored telepathy to the point where they are almost without will or intellect of their own. They will do as Enton directs without question or hesitation and like him have come to find the present situation normal and desirable. They retain physical skills such as gun combat and even basic piloting but would struggle to concentrate long enough to perform a mathematical calculation or a complex technical task even if Enton wanted them to.

Enton and his followers are not inimical to the Travellers when they arrive but nor are they friendly. Travellers are just more complications, to be brushed aside or made to cease functioning as necessary. Communication is possible, and even a degree of cooperation, but as soon as Enton realises the Travellers will not help him to return the ship to jumpspace he will become hostile in his own potent but inconsistent way.

Enton probably has up to 10 followers, although this figure can be adjusted by the Referee as needed.

The Engineers are a small band of personnel and colonists who have not succumbed to Enton's madness. They are paranoid and jumpy, and prone to bouts of irrational anger but sufficiently self-disciplined to resist the worst effects and continue to work together. The Engineers are not all members of the engineering crew; most are actually colonists. However, they have rallied around the ship's engineering officers. Initially, the Engineers secured the drive chambers and crated a haven to operate out of but were driven off with heavy casualties and have now taken refuge in one of the seeder segments.

The Engineers do not have a clear idea what is happening aboard the ship but know the drives ran wild and some kind of madness gripped the survivors. It started with a few individuals but now most of those left alive have descended into a feral state, killing one another and even eating the bodies. It was a horde of these ferals that drove the Engineers out of their original haven. They somehow got past locked security doors and attacked everyone they encountered. The Engineers lost half their number fending off the first assault and after several subsequent attempts caused even more casualties they took what they could and relocated.

The Engineers have holed up in the engineering section of one of the seeder segments and turned it into a fortress, venturing out only to gather supplies or seek clues about what is happening. They can muster about 50 personnel, about a quarter of whom are crewmembers with good technical skills and a knowledge of the ship. The remainder are colonists, trained to tame a world but with little idea how to run a starship. They are well armed and have plenty of tools but need to forage outside their fortress in the engineering section to find food and materials. They do so in an organised fashion, using the ship's internal security cameras and their own engineering-crew communications headsets to guide the foraging parties past dangers. They will also make reconnaissance sweeps of the ship using the cameras from time-to-time but many are broken and ones that do work make grim

viewing. The Engineers are thus unlikely to notice the Travellers' arrival right away but once contact is made they will assist the Travellers if trust can be established.

The Survivors represent about half the current population that are not part of the Engineer faction. Most are more or less rational but badly affected by the situation. They can be reasoned with but have deep-seated fears or compulsions and are prone to hallucinations. The survivors are not a faction; they are small groups or lone individuals who survive as best they can. Survivors retain their knowledge of technical skills and the function of the ship and may assist the Travellers if they can be won over. However, they have been through weeks of terror and madness, and may make decisions out of fear rather than sensible self-interest. Survivors may have weapons from one of the shipboard security lockers or the colonists' armouries. And will use them without hesitation. Indeed, the typical survivor has made it this far by being willing to shoot first and not bother with questions at all.

There are probably around 120–150 survivors scattered through the ship, with no group larger than individuals, although this number can be adjusted by the Referee to suit the needs of the narrative. Survivors are likely to try to retain some semblance of normality. Those that have access to accommodation areas will forage for intact clothing and use working showers when they find one, so long as they think they are safe. Indeed, many of the personnel aboard have met their end because they were desperate for a shower and a hot meal and took one risk too many to get them. Survivors will typically evade or hide from anyone else they spot but are as likely to fight as to talk. In general, many will be willing to drive others off with threats or warning shots but some of the survivors could be described as rationally psychotic. These will strike first either out of fear or in order to rob the bodies.

The Ferals are those who have completely succumbed to the madness they endured. Ferals are beyond rational thought, although often they remember how to open locked hatches or activate autogalley sequences. Some will repeat the same actions over and over by rote, such as entering the unlock/awaken codes for a low berth and may do so even when it is not relevant. For example a feral might know the armoury lock code and obsessively try it on every keypad they encounter. Ferals are territorial and may regard areas quite far from where they make their lairs as their own. A feral might track someone who entered such an area and attack them with just as much vigour as they would defend their living space. There is no rationality to such behaviour.

There are probably around 150–180 ferals on the ship, typically solo or in groups of five or less. They may have firearms but if so the weapons will not have been properly cared for and may malfunction. Ferals may not remember to load firearms or may carry one and try to use it even if they do not have ammunition. Ferals are likely to be filthy and dressed in rags, although it is possible there are a few who are obsessively clean and tidy. Ferals will typically hide and observe rather than charging headlong at anyone they meet and may allow a group to pass through their territory if the odds are not good. However, they are irrational and may decide to take on even a heavily armed band of Travellers. If so, the approach could be anything from stealthy ambush to a head-on charge straight onto the Travellers' gun muzzles.

The Cannibals are not a faction. Some of the survivors and some of the ferals have descended into cannibalism. There is no need for this; it is a response to the madness they have experienced. Feral cannibals will be quite obvious but an otherwise rational survivor or group may conceal what they have become. This is not out of shame and might not be a deliberate deception. It is more that cannibalism has become as normal to some of these individuals as anything else in their lives. They will cook nice meals with human flesh, drink wine salvaged from the stores with their dinner and clean up afterward.

The whole process is so normal to them that it may not be obvious just what is going on in that stew. Feral cannibals will hunt the Travellers to eat them but survivors are more likely to reveal themselves when they calmly start cutting bits off a downed enemy or putting obviously human body parts in an oven. If played right this could be truly horrifying to the Travellers; it is one thing to see a wild-eyed savage munching on a severed limb but when an apparently normal person offers human flesh around – and simply cannot see there is anything wrong with it – that is a very different situation. The Referee should note that survivor-cannibals do not justify their actions. They do not need to, any more than they would feel a need to justify breathing.

The Mystics are also not a faction; more a behaviour type seen in both ferals and survivors. Mystics are out of tune with the physical world and tend to fall victim to the ship's many hazards sooner or later. In the interim they behave strangely, wandering around mumbling nonsense or performing a task over and over. Occasionally a mystic's actions will suddenly make sense – of a sort – as they step out of the way of a jumpspace intrusion just before it opens or an analysis programme indicates the mystic is reciting all the words in the ship's operating

MASS DEATHS

On at least two occasions someone, or perhaps an automated system, has triggered a mass waking of the colonists still in low berths. Many did not survive the awakening process due to damaged equipment or a lack of medical assistance. Hundreds, perhaps even thousands, perished within hours of being woken from their low berths. How they met their ends varied but none were peaceful.

The effects of Enton's telepathic abilities were amplified by the confusion of waking from cold sleep. Some woke into this nightmare world and suffered an immediate breakdown, turning on others or killing themselves. Many more suffered accidents in their confusion or fell foul of the ferals. Others fought one another for equipment or weapons, only to be attacked by paranoid survivor groups for the same reason. Not everyone succumbed, of course. A few slipped away to become survivors or ferals indistinguishable from the others.

The most tragic was a band of around 100 – perhaps more initially – who overcame their confusion and paranoia to form an organised group. They improvised or obtained weapons and retreated from the chaos of the mass awakening, attempting to reach the command area of the ship. Of course, they did not know it was gone, and in the event they were cornered whilst attempting to cross the biosphere area.

For some time the band stood off piecemeal attacks by groups of ferals and wild newly-awakened colonists. The group was finally overwhelmed in a pitched battle in the biosphere, taking a couple of hundred ferals with them. The bodies are still there, telling a tale of a shrinking perimeter with the wounded inside. The centre of their formation was overrun with no survivors, but it is possible that some of the fighters managed to break out and escape. If so, the Travellers will likely encounter them as a small survivor group, assuming they have not gone feral.

manuals in alphabetical order. The mystics are heavily affected by Enton's uncontrolled telepathy but are unlikely to be telepathic themselves.



INSIDE THE SHIP

In general, the interior of the ship is a mix of tidy normality and horrific destruction. Just a few weeks ago this was a well-maintained colony ship and some areas are still clean and well-kept. There is damage evident in many places, however. This is mostly due to jumpspace intrusions but there have also been fires and deliberate damage to lighter components. Some instruments and systems have been smashed. Other items have been moved to create barricades and, here and there, are pieces of equipment that may have been cannibalised to fix something else.

The Referee can use this contrast to good effect; a perfectly intact stateroom in the middle of a heavily damaged area can be as jarring as the opposite. The general environment of the ship is also an opportunity to provide the Travellers with clues. There will be signs of a fight in many places, spent cartridges on the floor and bloodstains or bodies that might be anything from a day to a month old. In some parts of the ship corpses will be removed and perhaps laid to rest with dignity. In others they may be simply left to rot, perhaps with a few pieces missing. There are also signs that people have tried – and sometimes failed – to get into compartments or lockers. Some of those that have been forced open have been neatly picked clean of anything useful; others have been randomly plundered or simply destroyed.

The ship's general systems still work. Some areas are without power or water due to damage caused elsewhere and whilst safety cut-outs have sealed off damaged sections in most cases it is still possible to find a live cable or a flooded area. In most areas, unless there

is obvious physical damage turning on a shower or appliance will have the normal effect. Most cabins are quite liveable, although their state ranges from lived-in tidiness to ransacked. Overall, the Travellers will find that most of the ship has heat and light, readily available water and functional ventilation. Some areas have been deliberately locked down using the ship's security codes – this was actually done by the Engineers, although the Travellers will not initially know that – whilst other parts of the vessel have been secured by makeshift means or compromised by damage or forceful intrusion

The Main Hull

The main hull is largely intact, other than the front few metres. The bridge and command areas are simply missing and the ship is depressurised to the first internal bulkhead. The exposed hull members show clean, sharp edges as if cut with a dockyard fusion torch. This is a sign of jumpspace intrusion, which will be recognised by any Traveller unlucky enough to have encountered it before. A large gouge is also visible in one face of the main hull, as if a gigantic knife was drawn down the length of the ship. This breaches some compartments for two-thirds the length of the main hull but in most areas the gouge is not quite the full depth of the outer hull. It will have weakened the vessel as a whole but not sufficiently that immediate disintegration is likely.

Jumpspace intrusions have taken place at various points within the main hull, holing bulkheads or creating gaps in the deck. Most breaches are small but here and there are wide sections of corridor or compartment missing a floor or a wall. Compartmentalisation is compromised; if an outer bulkhead fails much of the ship will be exposed to hard vacuum.

The accommodation section is a maze created by twisted areas of damage, missing floors and obvious attempts to barricade some areas off from others. Survivors or ferals might be encountered here, fighting over stashes of supplies and barricaded semi-safe areas. It is obvious that someone has created a means to move around unseen by opening access points to the maintenance ducts. An encounter with hostiles inside a duct would be extremely hazardous and exploration of the ducts is more likely to find bodies than survivors.

The large biosphere has become a refuge for some of the crew and colonists. Areas where crops have been planted are overgrown but it is just a few weeks' growth – enough to provide hiding-places but little solid shelter. The crop areas were interspersed with small woodland sections and some of these have become lairs for bands of survivors or ferals. Conflict between them is intermittent but savage when it occurs. One piece of potentially useful information is available to the Travellers but may initially be overlooked – the biospheres are not overgrown. Judging by the state of the vegetation, these areas have not been tended for a few weeks but before that they were obviously cared for. This implies the situation aboard *Far Colony Postulant* is at most 3–4 months old.

The low berth compartments are a slaughterhouse. Ten thousand people were carried here and only a small proportion remain alive. Hundreds died in a power failure caused by a jumpspace intrusion and more perished when their low berths were deliberately switched off. This was done in blocks but not all the blocks were turned off and those that were appear to have been disabled at different times. This has been done neatly, either using the correct override codes or some other means to shut down the power feed.

The Travellers initially have no way of knowing why this happened. In fact it is the result of Enton's madness. He has at times developed a need to shut off power to some of the low berths. His intermittent ability to control electronic systems has allowed him to do so at times but on other occasions he has been unable. Other blocks were shut off by a technician under the influence of Enton's random telepathy. Most of these technicians were mystics and did not really know what they were doing; only that there was a thing they had to do and their hands seemed to know how. If Enton's influence is removed, there may be a handful who remember what they did but cannot explain why they wanted to murder so many helpless people.

Some of the low berth units have been forced open, clearly by someone lacking the correct codes and with no regard for the occupant. The people in these berths

have for the most part been bludgeoned or stabbed before they could begin the emergency wakeup process. In some cases body parts have been crudely hacked off after the corpse began to thaw. It is obvious from this that despite the availability of ration packs and fresh produce from the biosphere, some of the survivors dwelling in the accommodation and biosphere areas have become cannibals.

The power plant and engineering section are functional and in relatively good condition. The surrounding bulkheads are secure and locked, other than a single entry point which was deactivated by a mystic under the command of Enton. He has made the drive section his home, installing his followers in makeshift accommodation and creating a weird sort of shrine around the jump drive.

Enton's Shrine is made up of electronic components, wiring and part-dismantled maintenance robots. He has his followers bring such things to him and he reverently offers them up to the jump drive. He is not sure why he is doing this, other than a conviction the drive wants or needs them to maintain its failing jump field. In this he is not completely wrong. His intermittent telepathic sensing of the jump drive has permitted him to realise the drive is damaged and needs repair and that some components have failed. In his deranged state Enton is unable to comprehend the situation beyond a vague impression of needs. He knows the drive needs some electronic parts so he has offered them. The fact that this has not fixed the problem just means he needs to find more and perhaps offer them in the correct way.

Seeder Segment One

Seeder Segment One is heavily damaged, with ruptures along its outer surfaces that expose much of the internal space to vacuum. The main biosphere was a mix of temperate woodland and agricultural crops, like all the seeder segments, and the secondary biosphere contained a semi-desert environment. Nothing remains alive in these areas now. A few compartments have not been holed and it is possible some people are alive in this segment. The low berth chambers are completely destroyed, however, with no prospect of survivors.

Seeder Segment Two

Seeder Segment Two was set up as a mix of swampland and the usual main agricultural/temperate zone. It has minor damage from occasional jumpspace intrusions but is otherwise structurally intact. The interior is much like the main hull, with barricades and scenes of battle. A mix of survivors and ferals have lairs in this segment but rarely venture into the main hull. Most of the low berths are inert and the occupants dead.

This segment has been plundered by both the Engineers and Enton's followers, in very different ways. The Engineers have carefully recovered components they need or which might be necessary later, whilst Enton's people have randomly torn apart electronic systems and made off with some of the bits. The Travellers will find evidence of the latter throughout the segment, whereas the Engineers have targeted the power plant area.

Seeder Segment Three

Seeder Segment Three was set up as a mix of jungle and agricultural/temperate. It has some damage but is generally functional. The Engineers have attempted to drive off the ferals and recruit the survivors from this segment but with limited success. More personnel were lost than gained in the attempt but the segment does have a lower population of potential hostiles than other areas of the ship. The Travellers may find abandoned lairs or evidence of fights between several people armed with firearms and others who apparently were not.

There is also evidence that someone has tried to secure and make safe the aft half of the segment. This has not been entirely successful but there are working security systems on most doors and access points. These are not hard to override, given the difference in technological capabilities between this ship and *Deepnight Revelation* but the Engineers will be aware it is happening. This will cause great alarm, as for the most part Enton's followers have been incapable of opening more than the occasional secured door. Someone systematically advancing through the segment will scare the Engineers and, of course, if they leave the doors unsecured others may find their way in.

The majority of the low berths are inert and the occupants dead. However, the Engineers have managed to protect those that contained still-living colonists by securing the low berth chambers. A programme to waken the colonists a few at a time and increase the size of the Engineers' faction has produced mixed results – some came out of the cryogenic units as ferals and some of the rational survivors chose to make their own way rather than join the Engineers. However, a few have become part of the faction and from time-to-time an expedition is sent to check on those still in suspended animation and revive some of them.

FAR COLONY POSTULANT

The Travellers' involvement begins as soon as they emerge from jump. Their sensors pick up a highly unusual reading emanating from a vessel in the system. It is very large – estimated at a little under 300,000

tons – and appears to have power, although it is not accelerating. The vessel looks to be emerging from jump but rather than the usual near-instantaneous arrival the vessel remains in an emergence-state.

A vessel emerging from jump sends a gravity wave across the system at lightspeed. One instant there is no mass present, the next there is. Afterward there are a few nanoseconds of 'ripples' after which the ship is part of the local gravity system as if it had always been there. This instance is different; the gravity wave has already passed *Deepnight Revelation's* position but the ripples continue. The jump field has almost completely decayed but occasionally there are bright energetic flashes around the ship as if some of its molecules are being annihilated by contact with jumpspace. The vessel certainly has damage; its fore section is truncated and there is damage elsewhere on the hull.

Weird readings from *Deepnight Revelation's* own jump drive suggest that interference from the gravity ripples would make jumping extremely hazardous. If the Travellers want to know, they could get far enough away from the other ship that the interference became negligible but this would require a transit to the far outsystem – much further than the distance at which a physical object would stop causing problems with the jump drive.

The Travellers could also simply wait. In a few days *Far Colony Postulant* will vanish into jumpspace once more, emerging after few hours. A few days after that its jump field will completely die away. Of course, by then everyone aboard *Far Colony Postulant* will be dead. At that point the Travellers can board safely, plunder the ship for salvage and move on if they are so inclined. This is hardly the stuff of grand adventure, however, and the crew might object to hanging around doing nothing whilst a ship is in distress.

Exploring *Far Colony Postulant*

As soon as the Travellers or their advance party boards *Far Colony Postulant*, they will get a sense of unease and slight disorientation. Psionically shielded individuals will not feel this but initially will not be able to say why. The Travellers may be worried about the jump field situation but all their sensors can tell them is that the vessel's jump field has not quite faded away to nothing. There seems to be no prospect of entering jump – this conclusion is in fact incorrect but the Travellers have no way to know that – but something unusual is definitely happening aboard *Far Colony Postulant*.

The initial stages of the boarding and exploration should be played for mystery and threat rather than instant action. The Travellers will find signs of a gunfight

here and there or may think they detect a person... or something... disappearing around a corner. If the Travellers can be coaxed into rushing about chasing noises and fleeting heat signatures, so much the better. They will be able to build up a picture of the situation but it is unlikely to present any answers.

The Travellers will, sooner or later, have an encounter with someone. This is likely to be a feral, foraging or perhaps stalking the Travellers. If they are in the habit or splitting up or focus too closely on what they are doing they may be vulnerable to ambush. It is even possible they will encounter a feral so far gone they just attack on sight. This situation should not be hard to deal with but it presents the Travellers with questions and may potentially mislead them into thinking the whole crew are feral. The Travellers may also spend a considerable amount of time trying to coax information out of a feral with kindness and offers of food, only to be attacked as soon as they let their guard down.

The exploration phase of the adventure may also include a number of incidents, as well as situations arising from the Travellers entering areas described in the general ship data. They may find the biosphere battle site, a low berth chamber with cryo units smashed open or unpowered units occupied by corpses. Any section of the ship can contain survivors or ferals. The following encounters can happen almost anywhere.

Feral Assault

The Travellers come under attack by a band of between four and eight ferals. This might be quite sophisticated – they are cunning and know their surroundings well. A feral might try to draw the Travellers into an ambush if they are in the habit of chasing noises or might flee over pre-prepared traps. Alternatively, the Travellers might realise they are being stalked and set an ambush of their own or contact could occur by mutual surprise.

Any way it happens, this encounter will be short and violent. The ferals will attack on sight, although they are clever enough to move around a flank or sneak up before launching their assault. They will fight hard for a short time then retreat unless they are obviously winning. If pursued they will race back to their lair or try to hide, which could turn the situation from a stand-up fight into a bug-hunt.

As well as physical danger the incident may pose more questions for the Travellers. Why are the crew acting this way? If the Travellers have put a time frame on the incident by now, they will find themselves wondering

how such complete degeneracy can occur in just a few weeks. They may also wonder what happened to all the thousands of colonists but that question will be answered when they find the low berth chambers.

Jumpspace Intrusion

As the Travellers are passing through or investigating a compartment, a jumpspace intrusion takes place. This is unmistakable to anyone who remembers the cautionary parts of training in any spacegoing service. The intrusion takes the form of a bright, silvery-white 'hole' in space, possibly in mid-air. It may move a little and change size but vanishes within a few seconds. In that time it annihilates anything it is touching. If that is only a few air molecules, the result is a small burst of heat and radiation doing 1D damage to anyone within three metres and 1D rads to anyone in line of sight. A solid object, or even a vacc suit, will stop the radiation but even a partially unsealed suit (for example an open faceplate) will expose the Traveller to it.

If the intrusion touches a Traveller, it will annihilate whatever part of them comes into contact, with the same effect as if it touches a solid object. Contact with something solid causes 3D damage to anyone within four metres and 3D rads to anyone within line of sight. A Traveller who loses fingers or another body part has them cleanly sheared off and turned to energy. Blast damage may mangle the stumps.

The Referee can modify this encounter. Perhaps a feral or survivor might come into contact with the intrusion or flee in sight from it. If it is moving the Travellers might be called upon to make Athletics checks to dive out of the way. As with other encounters, however, this is not just about physical threat. The Travellers will surely be alarmed that pockets of jumpspace are forming inside the ship. Those with good Engineer (j-drive) or Science (physics) skills may recall theoretical work on the phenomenon.

According to an unproven theory, a ship experiencing what laymen call 'jump bounce' may suffer intrusions of this sort. A bounce would be, theoretically, instantaneous so according to the best science available an intrusion would also be instantaneous. Indeed, it might not even be noticed as such at the time; instead those nearby would experience an explosion and radiation flash. Even if they survived, they might never know what happened. The inference here is that this ship is experiencing something just beyond a theory considered to lie at the outer edge of knowledge.

Cannibal Survivors

The Travellers may encounter one or more survivors, who will be frightened and try to avoid contact. At some point they run into an individual or small group who have turned cannibal. They behave no differently to other survivors and contact can be established. However, at some point their behaviour will become apparent. Ideally, the Referee should present this in a truly horrifying manner by making it matter-of-fact. Someone the Travellers have spoken to and who has given them information starts cutting pieces off a recently deceased enemy or brings out a joint of meat and prepares to cook it.

None of the cannibals know why they are compelled to eat fellow humans and none were cannibals before the incident began. They have no interest in any other species; only their own. The reason is a craving for certain trace elements and vitamins triggered by Enton's telepathic effects. Those who have a good balance of these elements are unaffected but those who are deficient become subject to an intense craving for them and a sense of rightness when consuming food that contains them. The flesh of those not deficient is perfect. Essentially, a side-effect of Enton's telepathic field makes those who are deficient in certain elements want to eat the flesh of those who are not. This form of cannibalism can be cured by protecting the individual from the telepathic effect or feeding them a good, balanced diet for a few days. Of course, the Travellers will not know it is so simple and there are the psychological effects to think of even if the Travellers do not shoot cannibals out of hand.

DEALING WITH ENTON

The Engineers will become aware of the Travellers after a while. They will then monitor their progress through the surviving cameras. Heated debate breaks out – should they contact the Travellers? Should they hide from them? The Engineers' leader is overcautious and wants to observe just a little longer before making a decision but eventually with the more rebellious elements threatening to overthrow her she agrees to make contact.

The most likely form contact is a disembodied voice (from a nearby wall speaker) warning the Travellers of an impending ambush or jumpspace intrusion. If the default backstory of the adventure is used the Travellers may know the language in use. If not they will have to

translate and the warning might not be heeded. Once contact is made, a cautious discussion can be held by way of the ship's internal communications system.

The Engineers will invite the Travellers to come to their haven and direct them. They will provide assistance and warnings using the internal cameras and comms but also want the Travellers to pick up some supplies and equipment for them. Depending on who is at the comm, the Engineers might guide the heavily-armed Travellers into a feral-infested area in the hope they will clear it or use them to get something the Engineers need but lack the fighting power (or the will) to try for. This may not endear them to the Travellers.

If the Travellers do go to the meeting, the Engineers are unwilling to allow heavily armed strangers into their secure area but can direct them to a reasonably safe area nearby. The Travellers might have to run off survivors or fight ferals in order to make this area 'reasonably safe', causing additional annoyance, but the Engineers will come to meet them if they reach the designated point. What follows might be a rather unpleasant exchange but the Engineers have information the Travellers may require and in return they desperately need help.

The Engineers have a reasonable idea of what has happened. They do not know about Enton personally but are aware of some kind of psionic phenomenon. They also know the jump drive is refusing to completely shut down and the ship keeps skipping in and out of jumpspace. This is not supposed to be possible, at least not within the science the Engineers know. The Engineers can warn that if the drive is not properly 'bled off' (another term that would send an actual jumpspace physicist into a rage) it may dissipate the last vestiges of its field throughout the ship or even snap the ship back into jumpspace with no field to protect it. Either way, everyone aboard is dead.

The only solution is to reach the drive chambers and bleed off the last of the jump field manually. Any skilled starship engineer can do this but it is a risky procedure. The Engineers do not know what resistance will be faced, only that they have tried to fight their way to the drive rooms before and were driven off with heavy casualties. The psionic effects are worse in that area, as well. Still, some of the Engineers will accompany the Travellers if they make the attempt and others will provide assistance by using the internal security monitoring system.

Reaching the Drive Rooms

The Travellers will have to fight their way to the drive rooms unless they can come up with some other, clever solution. Blasting holes in the seeder ship with *Deepnight Revelation's* weapons is a bad option, as it will inject energy into the last remnants of the jump field. This might cause the ship to vanish into jumpspace or be destroyed in real space; either way the result is the same. It might, however, be possible to sneak past some of the obstacles. Enton's followers will be aware of anyone not psionically shielded, although he and they may not realise what the Travellers are up to until they are close to the drive chambers.

The Travellers will have a couple of fleeting encounters with ferals early in their advance, which will be easy enough to deal with. Then the internal cameras start to show bands of ferals leaving their lairs and heading purposefully towards the aft of the main hull. Enton has realised the Travellers are advancing upon him and wants help; the ferals cannot resist and even some survivors are compelled to join them. For those not psionically shielded the desire to defend the drive area and eliminate the intruders will start to feel like an itch in their mind but one that can be ignored for now.

Resolution

If the Travellers manage to reach the drive area, Enton will cause the remaining ferals to scatter and flee, then send some of his followers to 'invite' the Travellers into the drive area. Those without psionic shields 'know' that a mind wants them to go into the drive chambers but it is impossible to tell if it means them harm. This is because Enton himself does not know. The followers also extend the invitation, by a mix of gestures and incoherent babbling. If the Travellers attack they will have to fight their way in but they can at this point enter peacefully. After they do, the ferals will slink back and hang around nearby in a confused, expectant mob which occasionally turns on one of its members.

Enton wears a typical colonist's coverall, which is reasonably clean and is fairly lucid. He communicates in a mix of words and thoughts, which do not translate well. The Travellers will also be subject to the general disorientation caused by being close to him, other than psionically shielded individuals who will only hear Enton's words.

The gist of what he is saying is that 'the noisy light is going out' and that he needs it to survive. He believes this; the jump field has been in his mind since he became aware of it in the low berth, and he remembers nothing before that. To him, the silence that follows the

collapse of the jump field will be like the end of the world or the departure of a god. It is obvious from his shrine and his ramblings that he is quite mad and very dangerous but there is no malice in him.

The Travellers can resolve this situation any way they please. If they simply shoot Enton, his followers and the ferals will attack them as the jump field finally collapses. Intrusions appear throughout the ship, whose structure begins to fail. The Travellers will have to evacuate – fast – and the ship will be totally destroyed along with everything and everyone still aboard it.

One alternative is to help Enton keep the field going for a while. Skilled engineers can boost what is left of the jump field to stave off final decay for some days. This would provide time for the surviving low berth passengers to be revived and rescued or for the seeder segments to be moved away and used as lifeboats. Keeping Enton stable during this time would be tricky but he cannot read minds. He does not know what the Travellers intend and can be deceived as readily as anyone else – although he is a madman and might not react rationally to carefully planned misdirection.

At the end of the decay period, *Far Colony Postulant* will snap back into jumpspace and be destroyed along with anyone aboard her. This is probably the kindest option for Enton, who cannot live without the dying jump field and who cannot be allowed loose aboard another ship. What happened here will happen aboard any ship he is on and a low berth cannot prevent him from touching the jump field.

It would also be possible to bleed off the remaining energy from the drive. This will cause some damage to the ship and completely wreck the jump drive but it will save the lives of those left aboard. Enton will go into a spectacular rage if this happens, directing the ferals, his followers and everyone else under his control against the Travellers. He will do his utmost to kill everyone and make non-functional every electronic system aboard *Far Colony Postulant* before he collapses and becomes catatonic. He will die soon afterward no matter what medical assistance is rendered.

Bleeding off the remaining drive energy will require protecting whoever is doing it from Enton and his followers. Every 1D rounds, the Travellers can make an Engineer (j-drive) check. This begins at Formidable (14+) and becomes one degree of difficulty easier each time until the check is made. As soon as the first check is made, jumpspace intrusions begin tearing the ship apart. The Referee can track the damage as a percentage. This is the amount of the ship that is simply... gone.



Each time a check is failed the Referee rolls 1D for every point of negative Effect and adds this to the damage percentage. So, if the Formidable (14+) check is failed with Effect-4, the Referee rolls 4D. By the time the Travellers get to make their next check, 4–24% of the ship has been spectacularly destroyed, converted to energy and radiation. This will be small pockets scattered through the ship, so there will also be areas holed or even detached from their neighbours. It is possible that the Travellers will fail to bleed off the drive energy and the ship be destroyed around them. If Enton is killed once the bleed-off begins the ship will not snap back into jumpspace.

Thus the three likely resolutions are:

1. Kill Enton without bleeding the drive. The ship is torn apart by jumpspace intrusions over the course of the next 15 minutes. The Travellers will have to get out immediately and cannot salvage anything.
2. Convince and assist Enton to stabilise the drive and let the Travellers evacuate everyone they can. The Travellers have several days to salvage whatever they want from the ship.
3. Bleed the drive. The Travellers will have to fight Enton and his followers and the ship will be damaged, but whatever is left of it can be salvaged.

The Travellers will also have to decide what to do with anyone they save from the ship. If the Referee wants a simple, if rather trite, ending to the adventure there could be a habitable planet in the system. The surviving colonists can land their and begin their colonisation mission. The trauma of what happened aboard *Far Colony Postulant* might cause a rather odd society to arise but perhaps time will heal some of the scars.

Alternatively, the Travellers might plunder the ship for resources and personnel. In this case they may gain dozens or even hundreds of additional crewmembers. Their mental traumas may cause problems for a long time to come and the Travellers will have to train and integrate them with the crew. Some will want to go home, some will be toxic by no fault of their own. Perhaps the Travellers will be comfortable working with a recovered feral ex-cannibal... or perhaps not.

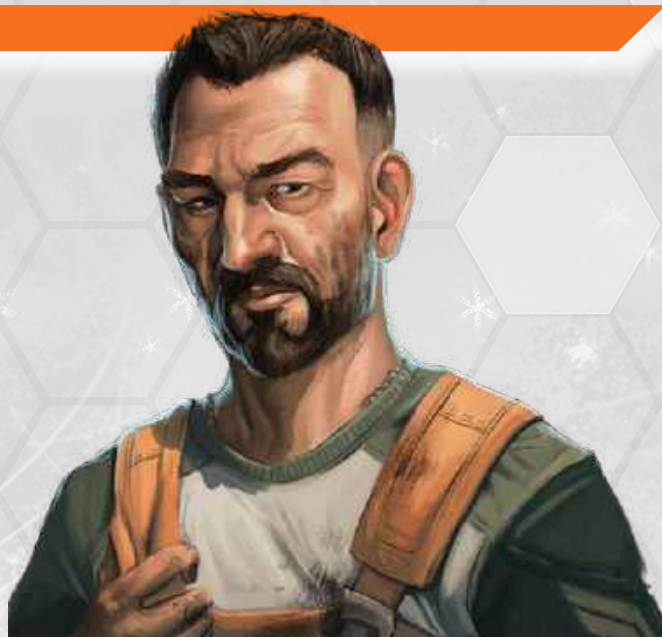
The *Far Colony Postulant* incident has the potential to be a short adventure or a long-term influence on the mission. Perhaps the Referee might expand upon it. What if Enton and his ship pop back into jumpspace and are not destroyed? Will they emerge somewhere else? There is also a possible spinoff adventure, in which the Travellers are among those who wake up into the real-time nightmare of *Far Colony Postulant*. A battle royale or a team deathmatch are the likely scenarios but as always subsequent events are at the discretion of the Referee and the Travellers.

CHARACTERS AND OPPOSITION

It is unlikely the Travellers will encounter opponents other than humans. There are cargo-handling and maintenance robots aboard the ship but these are unlikely to be a hazard even if they are functional. Interactions with ferals will more than likely be violent but survivors may act more like rational people.

JOSEPH ENTON

SPECIES			GENDER	AGE
Human			Male	—
TRAITS			—	
STR	7	INT	6	Admin 2, Profession (farmer) 1, Survival 1
DEX	8	EDU	7	
END	6	SOC	6	
PSI		9		
EQUIPMENT			None	



BACKGROUND

Enton was a typical colonist at the start of the voyage. Bored of office work, he signed up for a training programme and set out to make a new home among the stars. His psionic talents are untrained, intermittent and wayward. Indeed, Enton would not consider himself to be psionic; he simply does what his instincts tell him to do. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not.

Enton can be lucid but is never rational. Mostly he wanders around the drive chambers mumbling or sits quietly for hours on end listening to the fading jump field. Then he will have a burst of manic energy, ordering his followers to carry out a vaguely defined task or rearranging some part of his shrine before lapsing into absent-mindedness. He is living in a weird dream world where some elements are real and no longer really understands the difference between what he can do in person and what he can do with his mind. His telepathy causes this sense of unreality to leak out and affect those around him. The effect diminishes with distance but it can be felt at least slightly throughout the ship.

Enton wants the jump field to come back. He does not understand the implications of this and would not care if he did. Nothing matters beyond filling his mind once again with the glorious noise of the jump field. He is aware that this has something to do with the

jump drive machinery. He is not inimical to anyone unless they anger him by impeding his plans – perhaps by withholding some piece of equipment that Enton wants to use as an offering to the drive. He will also become enraged at random, usually at something that complicates his mental picture. This can be a piece of furniture out of place or the bright telepathic signature of someone waking from low berth suspended animation. At other times he will be seized with the calm certainty that a person or object must be removed from his perception – in other words killed or destroyed.

Enton does not use weapons, although if he thought to he could probably arm himself either with a gun or a hand weapon of some kind. He would be ineffective in a physical fight, however, as he is distracted by what is going on in his mind.

Enton has no conventional psionic abilities, although his wayward telepathy does mimic some functions. He can sometimes use the Life Detection ability and has an uncontrolled Mind Link, albeit a weak one, with everyone aboard the ship. He also has a vague version of the Sense ability which focusses on the jump field but can give sometimes Enton an impression of what is happening elsewhere in the ship. These abilities are not defined with the standard rules; they are a plot device for the use of the Referee.

Travellers who are psionically shielded by any means are immune to the effects of Enton's abilities. He does not have the training to break through a shield and does not really understand what one is. A telepath who tries to make contact will be overwhelmed by the seething chaos of Enton's mind. They will suffer one point of damage each round of contact with no prospect of doing more than adding to the cacophony going on in there. A persistent telepath should be rewarded with insights into how Enton sees the world but communication is impossible. Nor can Enton be controlled or assaulted in this manner. Even the most skilled mental strike is lost in the chaos.

Passive Disorientation: Anyone not shielded and who is close to Enton suffers from increasingly strong effects. A vague sense of weirdness and disorientation affects any unshielded mind aboard the ship but approaching within 100 metres of Enton exposes Travellers to greater effects. Each round, the Traveller must pass a Routine (6+) INT check to maintain focus. A negative Effect imposes a penalty equal to that Effect on all checks. Within 20 metres the difficulty increases to Difficult (10+) with the same penalty. Intervening structures do not protect the

Traveller and the effect is constant whether Enton wishes it or not. Over time, exposure to this effect will grind down a person's will and possibly drive them insane.

Active Disorientation: If Enton is directly threatened and he notices – he actually might not – he will instinctively lash out at the minds around him. He has little control over this and sometimes it happens when he becomes angry. He has killed a few of his followers that way. The active disorientation effect has a range of 20 metres and can be used on anyone Enton is aware of. Psionically shielded Travellers are invisible to him and invulnerable to this effect. Anyone else must make a Difficult (10+) END check or be overcome with chaotic images and triggered emotions. The affected Traveller will either flee in terror for 1D rounds or collapse to the deck, unable to act, for D3 rounds. There is an equal chance of each happening or it can be subject to the Referee's whim. The Active Disorientation effect can only be targeted on one person at a time, but since Enton is psionically aware of his surroundings he does not need to see them. At times the ability gains a much greater range and may be used – unintentionally perhaps – to harm a random person somewhere in the ship.

ENGINEERING OFFICER CARAI ATTIX

SPECIES			GENDER		AGE	
Human			Female		—	
TRAITS			—	SKILLS		
STR	5	INT	9	Electronics (computers) 2, Engineer (j-drive) 3, Mechanic 1, Vacc Suit 1, Leadership 0		
DEX	9	EDU	10			
END	7	SOC	0			
EQUIPMENT				Weapons: Shotgun (4D, Bulky) or Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3)		



BACKGROUND

Attix is the leader of the Engineers faction, and formerly the engineering officer of the vessel. She is not a born leader by any means and inherited command when the rest of the senior officers were killed. Since then she has done her best and generally been successful but there are more charismatic people in her faction who may try to oust her as leader. She would actually welcome this but feels it is her duty to remain in command because she does not believe anyone can do

a better job of keeping her people alive. Attix is affected the same as everyone by the general disorientation and occasional hallucinations and becoming worn down by the burdens she bears. This has made her increasingly cautious and unwilling to consider new ideas. The Travellers will have to give her a reason to hope for her to become fully effective once again but if they can do so she will work hard to save the remaining population aboard the ship.

ENTON'S FOLLOWERS

Enton's followers are a mix of crew and colonists and are almost as deranged as he is. They are constantly subjected to the leakage from Enton's mind and generally act in accordance with his desires. However, they may not be entirely aware of those desires; these are lunatics receiving communications from a madman by way of mystical visions. The followers are devoted to the point of fanaticism but are not efficient. Their INT and EDU values reflect an inability to interact coherently with the rest of the universe.

STR 8 DEX 7 END 8 INT 3 EDU 4 SOC 4

Skills: Gun Combat 0, Melee 0

Weapons: Shotgun (4D, Bulky) or Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3)

TYPICAL ENGINEERS FACTION MEMBER

The typical Engineers faction member has either technical skills learned as a member of the crew or a background as a colonist. Most of the latter came from the lower end of the salary scale; people who were unable to progress in their careers or stuck in dead-end jobs but who wanted a better life. Colonists received some training and deadweights were not accepted for the mission. Thus any former colonist is a resourceful and determined individual even if they do not have many relevant skills. All members of the faction are tired and fearful and many doubt their leader's ability to get them through the disaster. A serious setback could shatter the faction.

STR 7 DEX 8 END 7 INT 8 EDU 8 SOC 6

Skills: Electronics (any) 1, Engineer (any) 1, Mechanic 1, Vacc Suit 1 OR: Profession (any) 1, Gun Combat 0, Mechanic 0, Survival 0,

Weapons: Shotgun (4D, Bulky) or Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3)

TYPICAL SURVIVOR

Most survivors are colonists, although a few crewmembers might be encountered. They are worse affected by Enton's telepathy than the Engineers – mostly because they lack the support of a large group – but less so than the ferals. Sooner or later, these survivors will descend into the same state as the ferals. Their reduced INT and EDU reflects the fact that this has already begun, whilst a reduced END is the result of a patchy diet.

STR 8 DEX 8 END 6 INT 6 EDU 4 SOC 6

Skills: Electronics (any) 1, Engineer (any) 1, Mechanical 1, Vacc Suit 1 OR: Profession (any) 1, Gun Combat 0, Mechanic 0, Melee 0, Survival 0,

Weapons: Shotgun (4D, Bulky) or Submachine Gun (3D, Auto 3) or Club (2D) or Knife (1D+2)

TYPICAL FERAL

Ferals are sub-human now but have become stealthy and cunning in order to survive. Most are filthy and underfed.

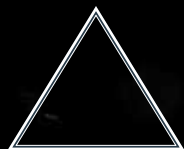
STR 6 DEX 7 END 4 INT 3 EDU 1 SOC 0

Skills: Melee (any) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Weapons: Club (2D) or Knife (1D+2)

LIBRARY DATA

ANIMAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS



In the course of their voyage the Travellers will encounter a great many animal species. Few of them will be seen again, since there has been no transfer of species between worlds in most of the areas the Travellers pass through. The exception is the Far Side of Nowhere region, where many species have been transplanted by the Ancients and later by settlers from Terra.

Often there is no real need to detail the animal life of a planet. The Travellers do not really need to know more than 'some kind of large herbivore; harmless' in most cases. The creatures presented here can be used when a more detailed animal is required and can be adapted for re-use when a similar creature is encountered. This is not uncommon; evolution tends to lead to the same sort

of creatures in similar conditions. A few of the animals presented below are more unusual; studying those might be an adventure in itself.

Most 'environmental encounters' are with the natural hazards of the places the Travellers visit. These hazards can be reused; one crevasse is very much like another. However, some situations are different. There may be no people or creatures present but still an opportunity for adventure and mishap. These can be used to enliven an otherwise mundane planetary visit, refuelling run or resource gathering expedition. Each environmental encounter is associated with a suggested set of circumstances but can occur in other places providing general conditions are suitable.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS: VACUUM AND SPACE

Creatures evolved to live in a complete or near-complete vacuum are very rare. Whether they dwell in open space or on rockball worlds with no atmosphere these creatures face the most challenging of conditions.

RADFLAT

High Background Radiation

The radflat is an extremophile that draws energy from ionising radiation rather than photosynthesis. It straddles the border between plant and animal life, being capable of movement and reproducing sexually but making its own food by biological processes. Radflats resemble flat worms around 5-20 centimetres long, with a curious paired dorsal ridge. When moving this is tucked in tight but the worm can push out its paired ridges to increase its surface area when in the presence of ionising radiation.

These creatures are more or less harmless except as a passive hazard. A group will crowd together near a strong radiation source, feeding and mating, and can cause interference with instruments or even mask a dangerous radiation source. They will anchor themselves to rock or a spacecraft hull and remain there as long as there is no stronger radiation source to draw them away. The natural gum used to stick radflats to their chosen surface can cause damage to light components such as wiring or antennae. This could mislead the Travellers about their surroundings or conceal a different hazard.

DRIFT NET

Vacuum or Trace Atmosphere

The drift net is a gossamer fabric of fine threads, spanning anything from one metre across to 20 metres plus. Despite the name, drift nets are often encountered lying still on the surface of a planetoid. They filter any carbon molecules they encounter, feeding their infinitesimally slow life processes and growing larger if sufficient food is available. When food runs out a drift net will release its grip and float just above the surface, seeking a new place to feed. They are generally harmless but will stick to personnel, vehicles and equipment where they cause a nuisance. A Traveller covered by a drift net can move freely, probably ripping the creature to shreds in the process, but may have trouble seeing out of a covered faceplate.

Equipment, vehicles and vacc suits have plenty of carbon molecules deposited on them to feed a drift net. Even without digesting the structure of the equipment, odd skin flakes from personnel who have handled the equipment represent a feast for these creatures, which will grow and repair themselves – and are unlikely ever to let go of such a lucrative food source. A drift net can be removed by a high-pressure decontamination shower or some careful scrubbing. They normally pose little hazard but contact with a Traveller's skin, such as when taking off a contaminated vacc suit, results in rapid growth of the organism and the production of chemicals toxic to humans. The usual effect is fever, blurred vision and nausea, sometimes accompanied by disorientation and even hallucinations. Contamination can easily be spread to other crewmembers, possibly incapacitating the whole crew of a small vessel. The effects are rarely directly fatal but starship operations can become extremely hazardous without the crew necessarily realising what is happening to them.

RADFLAT

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Radflat	2	1m
SKILLS	—	—
ATTACKS	—	—
TRAITS	Small (-4)	
BEHAVIOUR	Energy, Filter	



DRIFT NET

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Drift Net	6	1m
SKILLS	—	—
ATTACKS	—	—
TRAITS	Dispersed Organism, Slow Metabolism	
BEHAVIOUR	Omnivore, Filter	

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS:

GAS GIANT

The atmosphere of a gas giant is an extremely harsh environment. Immense wind speeds, tremendous pressure variance and high radiation are common hazards. Nevertheless, creatures have evolved to live in these environments.

LIGHTNING CLOUD

The lightning cloud is a dispersed, jellyfish-like creature that usually drifts on the winds of the upper atmosphere. Its surface is covered in millions of fine hairs or tendrils, which vibrate in the wind and generate a static electric charge. The cloud normally feeds passively by filtering particles out of the winds but can create an electrical discharge for defence or to stun nearby prey. It may not be apparent what predators the lightning cloud has to deal with but some gas giants do have a complex ecosystem where such measures are necessary. Clashes between two or more clouds have also been observed, resulting in tremendous lightning storms.

Bio-electrical discharges require an extensive period of charge but a lightning cloud can deliver more than one before it is powered down. The first charge is at full strength, with power diminishing at the rate of 1D per discharge. This regenerates at the rate of 1D per 12 hours of floating in the winds. Few lightning clouds are more than 50 metres across and the discharge is more of a threat to personnel than vessels. However, ships in the vicinity of a lightning cloud may suffer additional interference with their sensors and other electronics.

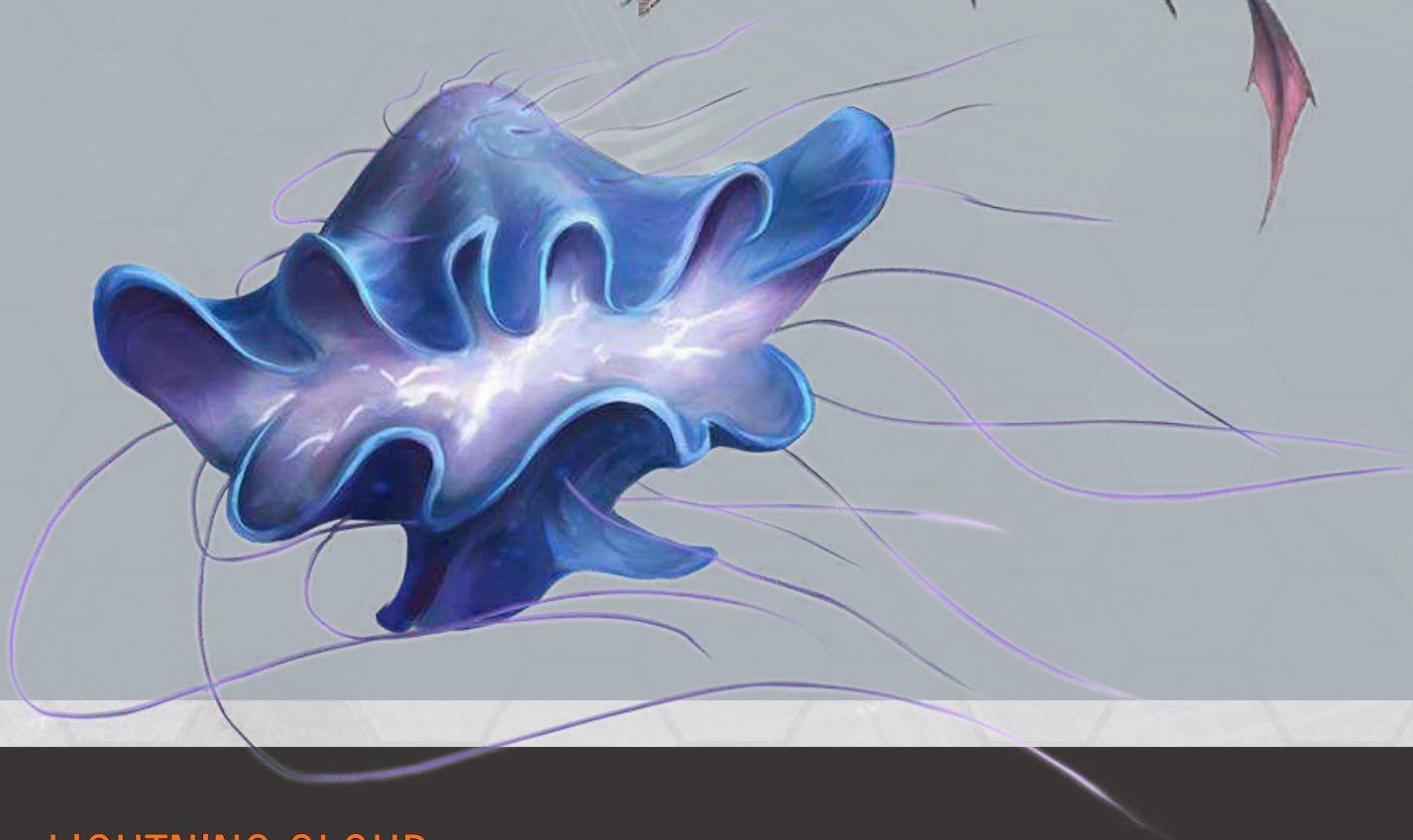
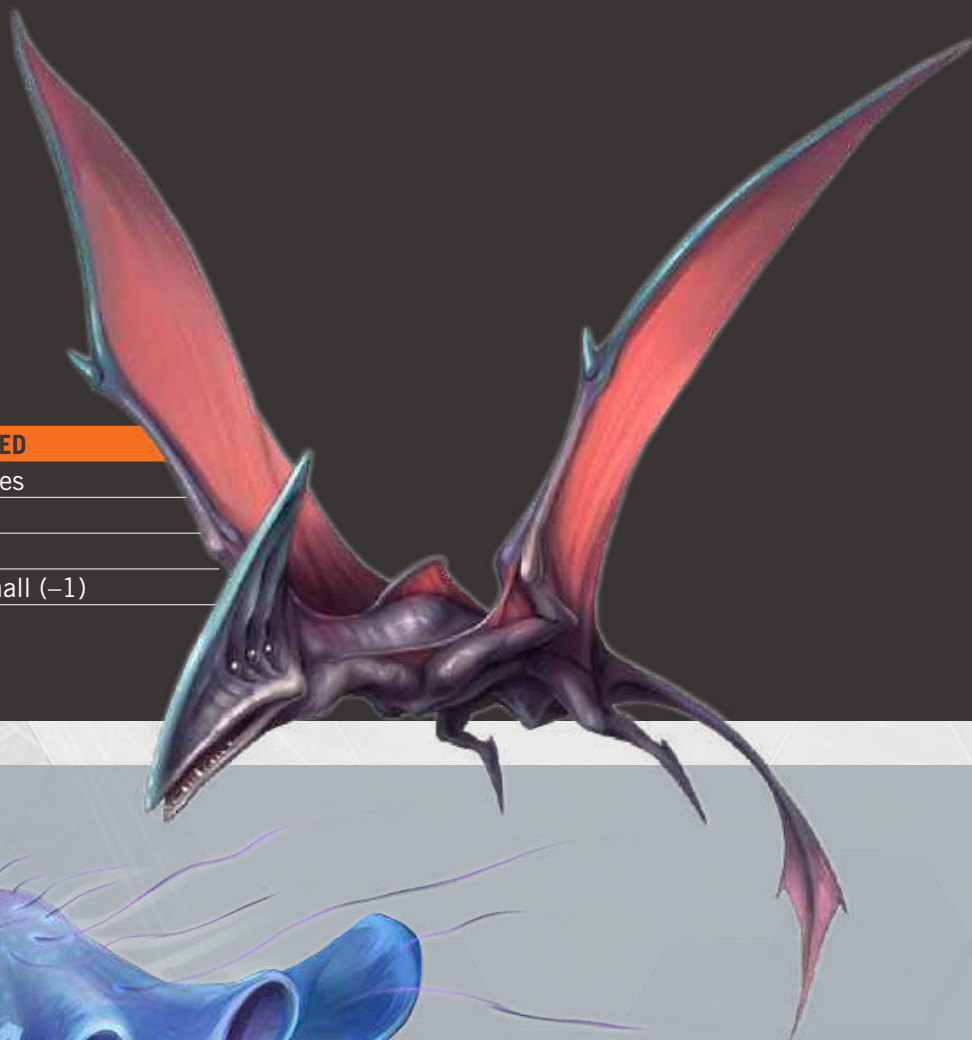
JOVIAN GLIDER

The Jovian glider resembles a pterodactyl in many ways. Variants on this type of creature are only found where there are other animals – such as lightning clouds – to feed upon. They spend their entire lives aloft and can fly almost from the moment of birth. Young are carried in a pouch on the adult's body, crawling out to drop into the deep atmosphere when they are ready. Weaker individuals do not survive this first plunge, lacking the strength to climb back to a high altitude. Those that do make it ride the thermals and currents in flocks until old age or injury renders them unable to remain aloft.

Jovian gliders will land on other creatures or spacecraft but it is not their nature to remain long. They do not seem to understand that spacecraft are not edible and will peck and tear at the hull of a ship as if it were a living creature. This does not cause any real structural damage but can dislodge antennae and other small components. Gliders are also sometimes drawn into the fuel scoop intakes of fast-moving ships that can cause serious damage to the fuel system. However, more commonly the result is only minor misalignment of components and the need to run an extra filtering cycle to remove the biological contaminants that are all that remain of the glider.

JOVIAN GLIDER

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Jovian Glider	12	Varies
SKILLS	Melee 0, Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Beak (3D)	
TRAITS	Flyer (medium), Small (-1)	
BEHAVIOUR	Hunter	



LIGHTNING CLOUD

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Lightning Cloud	150	Varies
SKILLS	—	
ATTACKS	Electric Discharge (bioelectricity)	
TRAITS	Bioelectricity (12D), Large (+6), Slow Metabolism	
BEHAVIOUR	Omnivore, Filter	

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS: BORDERLINE WORLD

Animal life in a borderline-habitable environment tends to be rather primitive. Single-celled organisms and very simple creatures that feed on them are common, whilst higher animals are not. There are, however, exceptions. These may provoke interest that might draw the Travellers into an adventure or they could create complications whilst the Travellers are trying to do something else.

WERNOT

The name 'wernot' is a contraction of 'were it not' – in this case, were it not for the extremely harsh conditions of this species' homeworld they might have eventually developed into a sentient race. Wernots are small humanoids with a dense bone structure and thick, almost scaly skin. Their faces are elongated in a manner rather disturbing to most people, since at first glance they appear to convey intelligence. The wernot are simply advanced animals, however. They move either in a hunched, more or less upright position or on all fours as the need arises. Wernots can use primitive tools but their intellect is limited to picking up suitable objects rather than shaping them to the task.

Wernots can withstand quite extreme temperature conditions and will be adapted to their homeworld's atmospheric taint if it has one. They are aggressively territorial but also cunning. They will observe intruders before acting and are sophisticated enough to send a weaker member of a band out as a sacrificial distraction. Whilst the Travellers are trying to figure out if these are smart animals or dumb people, the Wernots will be sneaking up on them ready to attack. They cannot be befriended or 'tamed' and will continue to attack whenever the odds seem good enough. This may leave the Travellers in the distasteful position of having to exterminate the local population in order to protect their own people.

METALLEECH

Metalleeches resemble hard-skinned worms some 10 to 20 centimetres long, with nasty-looking mouthparts and strange bumps on their outer skin. These, along with the mouthparts, secrete an acidic compound that slowly dissolves most metallic materials. It is also toxic to most creatures, including humans. Metalleeches seem to be able to detect the presence of metallic objects nearby and will crawl towards them, eventually attaching themselves and feeding on the slurry of part-dissolved material they create. Metalleeches will burrow inside a vehicle or grounded spacecraft rather than moving along the outer surface feeding on the skin. This can cause structural problems or compromise vacuum seals, which may not be immediately noticed.

Metalleeches are typically found in groups, which number four to eight individuals. Occasionally a much larger group might be encountered, with dozens of immature individuals swarming around a handful of adults. Such a group can quickly put a small spacecraft out of action if they are able to reach its hull undetected and can lie dormant for many months until a suitable food source becomes available. Under normal conditions metalleeches seek out metal veins in the rocks nearby and must sometimes make do with the metallic content in normal rock. Once these creatures have been studied it is possible to detect their presence from the waste products they leave behind.

WERNOT

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Wernot	30	6m
SKILLS	Melee (bludgeon) 2, Recon 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2	
ATTACKS	Club (2D), Thrown Rock (2D)	
TRAITS	Armour (+2), Fast Metabolism (+2), Heightened Senses	
BEHAVIOUR	Omnivore, Hunter	



METALLEECH

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Metalleech	4	1m
SKILLS	—	
ATTACKS	Caustic Bite (D3)	
TRAITS	Small (−4), Poison (Average /1D/1 hour)	
BEHAVIOUR	Metals, Hunter	



ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS: HELL WORLD

The animal life of a hell world tends to be hardy and either super-aggressive or extremely defensive. Large creatures are relatively rare but those that do exist are either at the top of a very vigorous food chain or have defences that enable them to survive against such threats.

THECOSPINER

The thecospiner is a reptilian creature with a body configuration similar to a Terran crocodile or dimetrodon. It has a series of tall spines running down its back, with shorter ones angled out and back. The tail ends in another group of spikes, which can be flicked with surprising speed. Attack from almost any direction is thus extremely hazardous, enabling a thecospiner to simply walk away from most threats. Its head has wide bony plates that protect the neck, which can also be used to deliver a sideways blow with a jerk of the head.

Thecospiners are riverbank omnivores, subsisting on underwater plants and small creatures for the most part. They operate in small family groups of three to eight individuals and are voracious feeders, generally moving along a section of bank devouring everything in their path. They can swim passably well but generally move in a series of underwater 'springs' from solid objects such as rocks or submerged logs. Their head plates act much like the trim planes of a submarine, helping the thecospiner shoot along under the surface. Attacks on humans are unlikely unless someone is actually in the water; movement on land is relatively clumsy.

BUSCADE

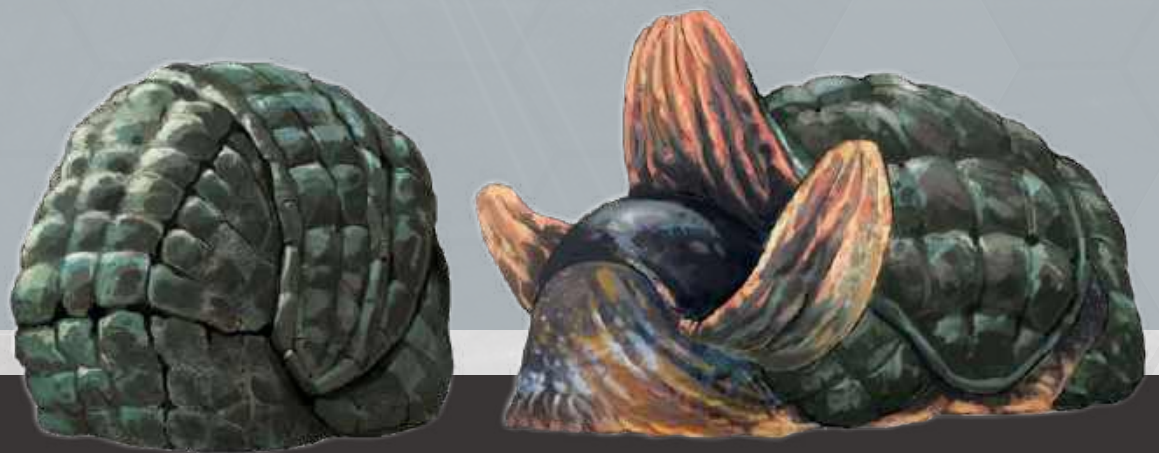
The buscade (a corruption of the archaic word 'ambuscade') resembles a rock in most ways. Few examples grow larger than a basketball in size and most are about half that. The leathery outer skin of the buscade not only camouflages it but also protects against extremes of environment. It can lie dormant for weeks or months at a time, activating only when a suitable prey creature approaches. Although the buscade uses a psionic attack it does not have a skill in any discipline; the ability is not consciously controlled.

Prey are stunned and disorientated by a powerful psionic 'screech', which can affect most species but is defeated by any form of psionic shielding. The screech is a brute-force attack, overwhelming the target's senses rather than directly causing confusion; as soon as the screech stops the victim can act normally. Whilst being attacked the target suffers 1D damage per round and must make an Average (8+) END check with a negative DM equal to the points of damage suffered that round to be able to act coherently. If affected they will blunder around and may cause further injury to themselves or another.

Once prey is dead or incapacitated a buscade will uncoil itself and slowly move to the corpse, which it digests with secretions on its outer skin. Typically the buscade will remain in the rotting corpse until all flesh is consumed, then move away a little to conceal itself again. Buscades rarely move far, so finding a 'graveyard' of various animal types is a clear warning one is in the area.

THECOSPINER

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Thecospinner	36	3m
SKILLS	Recon 2, Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Bite (3D) or Spines (2D)	
TRAITS	Amphibious, Armour (+3), Large (+2)	
BEHAVIOUR	Omnivore, Hunter	



BUSCADE

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Thecospinner	8	Less than 1m
SKILLS	—	
ATTACKS	Psionic Screech (1D)	
TRAITS	Armour (+2), Camouflaged, Small (−3), Psionic (special)	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Trapper	

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS: HABITABLE WORLD

Habitable worlds have the greatest variety and abundance of life. Creatures that evolve to fit particular niches tend to be broadly similar in terms of size, diet and so forth but can vary a lot in appearance. The role of a deer-like creature on one world might be taken by a six-legged reptiloid on another but overall their characteristics will tend to be similar. Creatures will not evolve to be super-fast unless there is a need or benefit to this; they will not develop camouflage unless there is something to hide from. This does not rule out the possibility of 'oddball' creatures or those that retain features they no longer need because their main predator became extinct.

LUMBER

Lumbers are peaceable but very large creatures that feed on tall vegetation. They lumber slowly across the landscape chomping on the sort shoots at the top of trees and bushes. They are hexapods, with three pairs of equally spaced legs and a long giraffe-like neck topped by an almost hilariously small head. The legs of a lumber are covered in thick hide with sharp, horn-like protrusions that can cut through small branches.

Lumbers live in small family groups and bear live young. Typically a group will consist of a mated pair plus two to five immature individuals. Maturity begins around 20 years of age, at which time the adult will wander off in search of a new family group. Most spend some time alone before finding a mate and starting a family. Once mated they are affectionate towards one another and cannot stand to be parted; a lumber that has lost its mate will usually look after its brood until they are old enough to leave, then simply stop eating and die.

It is possible that these gentle creatures are a lot smarter than their tiny brain would suggest. The existence of a secondary nervous system nexus/brain – a 'hindbrain' – has been postulated. Lumbers are certainly capable of recognising objects and landmarks, and of at least basic learning. They may even communicate with one another, although whether their various trumpeting, grunts and snorts convey any meaning is an open question.

SABRETOOTH TERROR

The sabretooth terror is a massive reptilian creature with a powerful pair of rear legs and four smaller frontal arms. These end in razor-sharp claws that are dwarfed by its huge downward-curving fangs. The terror hunts by charging into its prey, knocking large creatures down and holding them with the frontal claws whilst the fangs do their work. A muscular body and a short, heavy, tapering tail allow the terror to keep pressure on a struggling victim or even a vehicle.

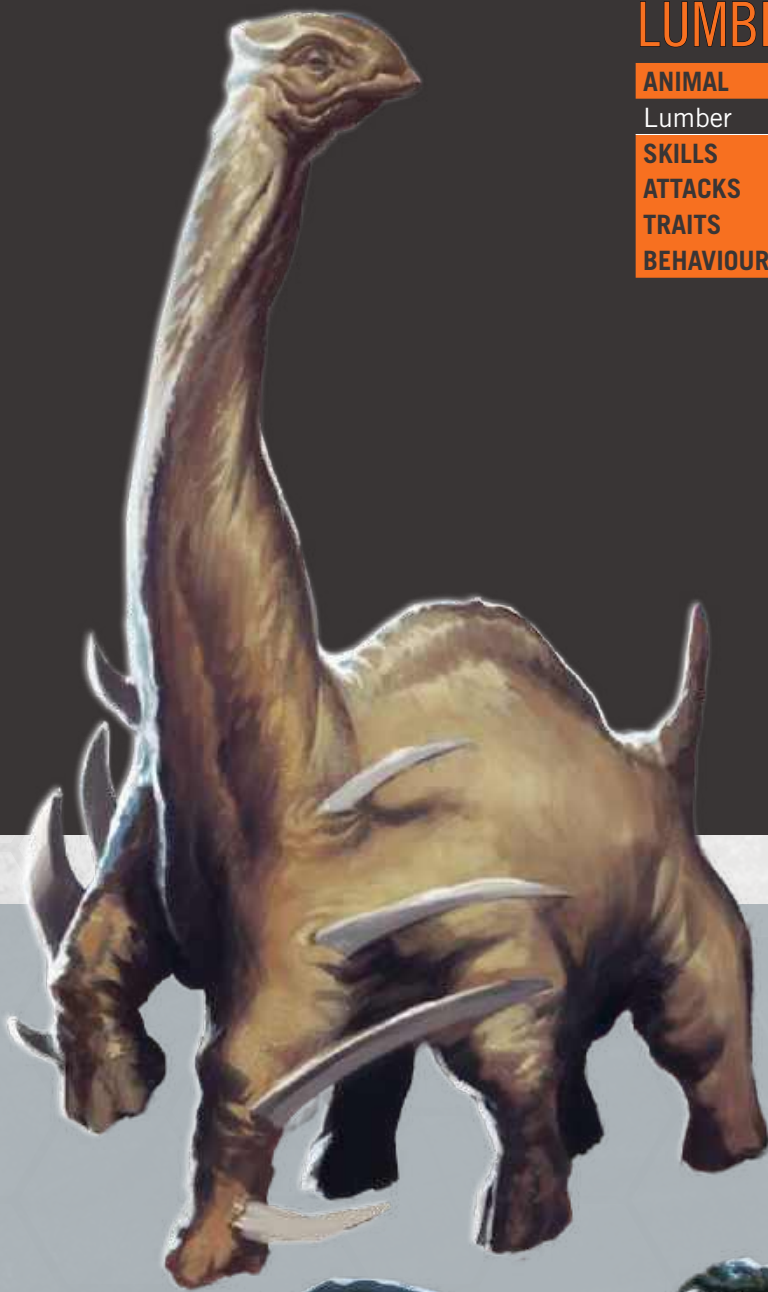
Terrors are solitary creatures, other than when a female has her brood of up to three young with her. They are extremely territorial and will kill just for the sake of it when food is plentiful. This, and the fact that the terror is highly intelligent for its type, makes it an extremely dangerous predator. Not only will a terror quickly learn that bangs and flashes are not going to hurt it, it will also observe the habits of a band of explorers and choose the best way to ambush them – or attack their camp whilst the majority are away. Once a terror detects intruders in its territory it will either destroy them or be killed; there is nothing in between.

LUMBER

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Lumber	150	4m
SKILLS	Survival 1	
ATTACKS	Tail Buffet (4D)	
TRAITS	Armour (+1), Large (+6)	
BEHAVIOUR	Herbivore, Grazer	

SABRETOOTH TERROR

ANIMAL	HITS	SPEED
Sabretooth Terror	110	5m
SKILLS	Melee (natural) 2, Recon 3, Survival 2	
ATTACKS	Charge (7D) or Bite (6D)	
TRAITS	Armoured (+4), Large (+5)	
BEHAVIOUR	Carnivore, Pouncer	



ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS: ROCKBALL WORLDS

Airless worlds with no population can be a challenge for the Referee to make interesting. There is nothing wrong with the Travellers encountering yet another lifeless rockball; this is entirely realistic. However, sometimes the environment will throw a few surprises at the Travellers.

THIN CRUST

This encounter would normally occur on a rockball or trace atmosphere world but could be adapted for use elsewhere. Underground water or seismic activity has created any number of pockets immediately under the surface. These might be empty or filled with water or gas. Activity on the surface risks cracking the thin crust. How dramatically this occurs depends largely on the weight of vehicles in use and the violence of activity. Drilling or using explosives risks a cascading collapse whereas simple movement will probably result in a series of widening cracks that offer some warning. Driving a vehicle or directing personnel to safety is more about figuring out where the firm ground is than anything else; a Navigation or Science (planetology) check will indicate a safe route.

Individuals or vehicles that fall through the crust might be lucky and just drop a metre or two into a hollow but there is a real chance of falling into a cavern. This might not be fatal on a low-gravity world but getting out again could be a problem. It is possible the cavern might contain crystals or unusual rock formations that could be harvested; the Travellers might even smash through thin crust and fall into a huge geode. This would be both hazardous and memorable, and might yield treasures.

MICROMETEORITE SHOWER

Objects large enough to cause a major impact are generally easy enough to track. Poorly equipped surface expeditions might lack the sensor equipment to do so but most of the time there will be sufficient warning to take cover or leave the area when an object capable of doing serious damage is inbound. Micrometeorites are more of a problem. A very dense cloud is simple enough to detect but a relatively small group of particles – typically no more than two centimetres across and often smaller – can go completely undetected. Arriving at speed such an object can go right through a vacc-suited Traveller. For this reason many exploration vehicles have heavy top armour and emergency shelters are commonly erected for personnel. These typically consist of a conical or sloped roof supported by stilts, providing shelter from projectiles moving in a generally downward direction.

Micrometeorite showers can vary considerably in intensity, lethality and duration. When a shower occurs the Referee should roll on the Micrometeorite Shower table to determine all three. Each should be rolled for separately. Intensity represents the chance of being hit by one or more projectiles, which is often a matter of luck as much as anything else. Travellers caught out in the open must make a straight 2D check at this difficulty. If it is passed the Traveller is not hit. If failed, the Traveller is hit by one attack with damage determined by the lethality of the shower. This is dependent on velocity, mass and amount of projectiles. Duration indicates the number of strikes that occur, which happen at intervals of 1D minutes. At the Referee's option intensity and lethality can be rolled for each strike rather than for all of them, which may keep the Travellers guessing.

In between strikes the Travellers may have time to get under cover and the Referee may allow the Travellers to modify their check to avoid being hit if they come up with something clever. However, it is not possible to dodge micrometeorites and movement or evasion makes no difference as they are not aimed. To reduce their chances of being hit the Travellers will need to find partial cover or do something that reduces the chance of a random hit. A Traveller with an armoured vacc suit might try to shield someone less well protected, for example.

Micrometeorite Shower

2D	INTENSITY	LETHALITY	DURATION
2 or less	Easy (4+)	1D	1
3	Easy (4+)	1D	2
4	Routine (6+)	2D	2
5	Routine (6+)	2D	3
6	Average (8+)	2D	3
7	Average (8+)	3D	3
8	Average (8+)	3D	4
9	Difficult (10+)	4D	4
10	Difficult (10+)	4D	5
11	Difficult (10+)	5D	5
12	Very Difficult (12+)	6D	6

For example, the Travellers are caught in a micrometeorite shower. They get no warning; the first they know about it is when fragments of rock start striking the ground around them. The Referee rolls for the intensity of the shower, getting an 8. Each Traveller must make a straight 2D check at an Average (8+) difficulty. Those who fail are struck. Next the Referee rolls for lethality. The result is a 5: each strike does 2D damage. Once the first strike is over the Referee rolls for duration of the shower, getting a 10 – five strikes in total. The next will occur in 1D minutes, giving the Travellers a chance to get under cover. The third strike is 1D minutes after that and so on.

A micrometeorite shower is not just about damage to Travellers. Equipment can be damaged or shelters holed and injured personnel will be leaking air from their suits. Thus the Travellers may have to deal with the fallout of a shower and assist casualties whilst not knowing if another strike is on the way.



ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS: BORDERLINE WORLDS

In this context, the term borderline world refers to any location with breathable air, which is not very welcoming. An arctic or desert region on an otherwise pleasant world may qualify, as well as worlds with very thick or tainted atmospheres.

GREYOUT

A greyout can occur anywhere there is sufficient atmosphere to carry dust, smoke or similar particles. The area the Travellers are operating in is blanketed in something that limits but does not completely block vision, causing a greyout. This may actually be more dangerous than a complete obstruction of sight because it is possible to work through or drive in these conditions. Prudent Travellers may hunker down for a while until the greyout has passed but those with an urgent journey or task – or an over-abundance of self-confidence – may well land themselves in trouble.

Operating without advanced sensor systems in a greyout is tricky at best, as visibility can improve then suddenly drop to almost nothing. Even with good instrumentation the rapidly changing conditions can be disorientating. This leaves the Travellers and others prone to secondary hazards; a sudden change in conditions just as a crewmember reaches the tricky part of a task can result in an otherwise avoidable accident. A greyout can be merely inconvenient or impose a delay but could easily spiral into a misadventure as over-confident crewmembers need rescuing from a crash or other incident in conditions where it would be wiser to stay put. This way, the greyout is both the cause of a situation and a complication in trying to resolve it. It can also be used as a 'clock' to make Travellers act quickly before visibility closes down again.

For Travellers operating with good sensor equipment, a greyout imposes DM-1 on all tasks that do not rely entirely upon instrumentation. This includes assisted tasks such as driving an ATV with excellent sensors, as the rapidly changing visual conditions are disorientating. For those without good sensors or who need direct visual input each task is subject to a variable negative DM determined by rolling 1D. Conditions can change in the middle of a lengthy task, although clever Travellers might find a way to predict a patch of good visibility lasting long enough to complete their task.

MATERIAL-SLIDE

A sudden shift in the position of a large quantity of almost any material can create a major problem for the Travellers. The material might be loose rock, snow or even water, creating a landslide, avalanche or flash-flood. All of these present similar problems and can inconvenience the Travellers in one of two ways. They may be on the loose material when it begins to move or in its path. In the first instance the Travellers may be crossing a wilderness area when the ground starts to slip away under them, or 'swimming' an amphibious vehicle across a body of water when some obstruction is removed and it begins to flow quickly. Maintaining control of a vehicle in these circumstances is near-impossible in terms of controlling its destination – it will go wherever the flood, avalanche or landslide takes it. However, it is possible to minimise damage to the vehicle by riding the wave and trying to guide it past obstacles. This requires a Difficult (10+) Drive check. Damage depends on local conditions; water might roll the vehicle over and bash the occupants about without harming an ATV all that much, whereas a boulder slide may well leave the vehicle inoperable.

Being caught in the path of fast-moving material is a different problem. An avalanche will bury a vehicle or installation and might tumble even something as large as an ATV. A flash-flood will wash away almost anything in its path and may reshape the local geography by depositing silt and rocks. A landslide of even modest size will flatten everything in its path. These possibilities can be used for dramatic purposes by the Referee, forcing the Travellers to take urgent action to evacuate a camp or pick up a field team or they may have to deal with the results. A movement of material can also be used more subtly, for example making the route back to base impassable due to sudden flooding or blocking a route with debris. Wildlife might also be disturbed by these conditions, forcing the Travellers to deal with a stampede or the need to search for the specimens they were previously studying.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS: HELL WORLDS

Hell worlds vary considerably. Most are obviously lethal, such as those with corrosive or insidious atmospheres but some can be more subtle. These hazards might be encountered in a dangerous part of an otherwise welcoming planet.

VIOLENT OUTGASSING

Outgassing can occur in many environments. On an uninhabitable world, heating of the surface rock can cause underlying frozen gases to rapidly expand and burst through, potentially tipping vehicles over or showering personnel with rock fragments. Habitable worlds may have pockets of gas caused by biological processes. These might be relatively harmless, such as flammable marsh gas, but might be far more unpleasant. A flammable/corrosive gas mix that ignites on contact with air or water could make an area impassable or force Travellers to take a route they otherwise would have avoided.

Outgassing taking place around personnel or a vehicle requires an Average (8+) Athletics (dexterity) or Drive check to stay under control. Failure indicates personnel are knocked down or vehicles violently rocked. Either circumstance inflicts 2D damage upon exposed personnel or 1D for those inside a vehicle. If the outgassing is accompanied by showers of rock, treat this as a micrometeorite shower and use that table to determine duration, intensity and lethality with DM-4. Outgassing of this sort might leave the area around a vehicle impassable or even result in a thin crust event (see page 114).

Biological outgassing normally results in a shower of noxious mud and a terrible smell, with a small possibility of a minor explosion. Such events are disorientating, imposing DM-2 on tasks carried out with the distraction going on but are not usually very harmful. Even a marsh gas explosion is not a very serious threat, doing D3 or 1D damage to anyone within a couple of metres. However, outgassing can be much more violent or contain dangerous chemicals. A variant on this hazard occurs when underground pockets of gas or oil catch fire. This can hurl huge boulders or showers of surface rock high into the air, creating a hazard at least equivalent to a micrometeorite shower. In all probability the combination of pools of burning liquid, showers of rock and random explosions will make the region entirely untenable and force Travellers to seek shelter or flee the area. Of course, what the Travellers find when they do rush into shelter may be even more hazardous.

TECTONIC AND VOLCANIC HAZARDS

Volcanoes and earthquakes are well-understood hazards and can often be avoided or approached with caution. However, some worlds are prone to sudden and violent eruptions or earthquakes, which can be hard to predict. A careful study of fault lines and warm spots under the crust can usually warn Travellers of the risks. However, some worlds are so active this is a pointless exercise; in other cases it is possible to build up an accurate picture of the danger areas but this can take weeks of painstaking work.

An extremely violent earthquake in a distant region can have delayed effects upon the Travellers. A good sensor watch will allow some warning of tremors, which will have largely dissipated by the time they reach the Travellers' position. However, this could trigger a secondary quake at a nearby fault. A tsunami can be caused by a land quake but an undersea event may produce a much greater effect. A large underwater landslide could displace enough water to cause a mega-tsunami. A normal tsunami might produce a wave 10 metres in height; a mega-tsunami might be one kilometres or even higher. Depending on the warning time the Travellers may be able to evacuate the area in an orderly fashion but may have to simply flee for their lives.

Sudden volcanic events can make the surrounding area unhealthy and require rapid action, especially if the Travellers have personnel on the volcano or within the active area. A larger eruption can have additional effects, such as tumbling enough rock into the sea to cause a mega-tsunami and the eruption of a supervolcano is an extinction-level event. An ongoing volcanic episode can produce huge lava plains and have massive environmental effects – a nuclear winter, poisoning of water with volcanic chemicals and the like – which would be hazardous to study but certainly interesting. Such large-scale incidents are likely to be the backdrop to an adventure rather than its cause or may impose hazards that would otherwise not be present as the Travellers try to do something relatively straightforward.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENCOUNTERS: HABITABLE WORLDS

Habitable worlds can pose many environmental hazards, most of them relatively mild. Weather tends to be more of a nuisance than a major threat, although it is always possible to die of hypothermia or drown in a creek due to complacency.

SUPER-SINKHOLE

Sinkholes are not uncommon where underground erosion has caused a void into which the surface material has fallen. Normally a sinkhole will be quite narrow and less than 100 metres deep, although an area can be riddled with them. If so, caverns may connect the holes; such a system can be very extensive. Operating in an area with multiple sinkholes can be hazardous as they may not be obvious or the approach may be deceptively safe. Personnel or vehicles may find themselves on terrain that slopes more steeply than expected or crumbles as they pass, drawing the Travellers towards the sinkhole. Most of the time some careful driving or clambering, perhaps with assistance, will be sufficient to escape. If the edge of the sinkhole crumbles or the Travellers break through into an undetected hole, they may have to abandon a vehicle and scramble to safety. An ATV or similar vehicle that has fallen down a sinkhole is lost but one that becomes jammed across the top – perhaps with crew trapped inside – offers the chance of a clever rescue.

Some sinkholes are much deeper, which can have interesting effects. On a world with similar atmospheric pressure to Earth, there is not much increase in air pressure down to 5 kilometres or so. Pressure at this point is about 1.2 atmospheres. However, at 10 kilometres this will have risen to about three atmospheres. A 25 kilometres sinkhole would be an incredible thing and exploring it poses challenges as air pressure on a standard atmosphere world exceeds 10 atmospheres. On a dense atmosphere world this would be much greater, posing a risk of implosion unless specialised vehicles were used. At the other extreme, a cavern system connected to the surface of a very thin atmosphere world might have a comfortable gas pressure, creating an isolated ecosystem far below the surface.

FOSSIL ECOSYSTEM

Sometimes, typically due to terrain barriers, a local ecosystem may survive whilst the surrounding conditions change considerably. This might occur in an area completely surrounded by mountains or sea, on a high mesa or in the crater of a volcano rising above the level outside plants and animals can easily reach. Often this local ecosystem is a 'living fossil', containing species that died out elsewhere. Alternatively, the isolated ecosystem might be the result of evolution in areas with no contact going in separate ways.

The existence of a fossil ecosystem will normally give Travellers an idea of how conditions used to be on this world but can pose some additional questions. If, for example, the outside ecosystem contains species found on other worlds and the isolated one does not, this suggests that large-scale transplantation took place and the world's own plant and animal life was displaced by the invader species. If the non-native species are confined to an isolated area, this suggests that a small 'home conditions' region was created for some reason. Both suggest starfarers but an isolated cluster of offworld vegetation implies this was the only area the offworlders inhabited. Perhaps there was an installation or base there at one time or perhaps a colony was established but failed. Either way, the isolated ecosystem may be worth closer examination.

T R A V E L L E R

FINAL NOTES

Expeditions is the last expansion for the Deepnight campaign, which was already a huge undertaking when it consisted only of the core books. The sheer size of this campaign poses some challenges for the Referee. It would be possible to skip right across the spiral arm in a few skill checks or to spend years of gaming time and never reach the Near Side of Yonder. Playing out the whole campaign in a meaningful fashion requires a balance between these two extremes and that means shifting focus as necessary.

As envisaged, the campaign is seen mostly at the 'big picture' level, with the Travellers as leaders or key personnel who are aware of this big picture without necessarily having to concern themselves with all the details. There is some book-keeping to be done but for the most part the bean-counting is abstracted so the Travellers can get on with making major strategic decisions.

However, it was never intended that the Travellers would voyage all the way to Terminus Point without leaving their command chairs. At some point the focus has to shift from the big picture to what is happening right here – whether 'right here' is a planetary wilderness, a seedy bar in the Far Side of Nowhere or a crisis in the small craft hangar. Balancing close-focus adventure with big-picture progress towards the final goal is a tricky business, in which the desires of the Travellers must also be taken into account. On one hand, the Referee needs to ensure the Travellers feel they are making satisfactory progress; on the other they must not have it too easy if the campaign finale is to have any meaning.

The *Deepnight* campaign is not about the finale – not entirely, anyway. It is all about the voyage and the wonders of the universe. The animal and environmental encounters, points of interest and any adventures triggered by minor incidents along the way are not obstacles to slow the Travellers' progress towards 'winning' the campaign; they *are* the campaign. These minor and major incidents are what the campaign is all about, at least as it was envisaged. In that, the *Deepnight Revelation* mission is as Traveller as you can get – travelling further, travelling to stranger places and travelling with as diverse a collection of people as you can imagine.

Early in the development of this campaign, original Traveller designer Marc Miller commented that the payoff for the campaign must not be just money. It was agreed that the payoff would be knowledge – revelation, if you will. Knowledge of the wider universe, knowledge of big facts and small details, knowledge that the Traveller game universe is bigger than Charted Space. This is still true but the realisation grew as we were creating this campaign that the real payoff is found in the adventures along the way; the odd little incidents, the sudden dangers, the moments of hilarity caused by misunderstanding an alien's figure of speech.

There is no pile of treasure waiting at the end of this campaign. The payoff is that the Travellers got to make this epic journey and have all those experiences along the way. The campaign is its own reward and dashing to the end cheapens the whole experience. So take your time, explore the worlds along the way, and above all... remember that the name of the game is *Traveller*, not 'reward at journey's end'.

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TRAVELLER

DEEPNIGHT REVELATION
EXPEDITIONS

Expeditions

Expeditions is a collection of additional resources for the Deepnight Revelation campaign. It presents encounters and points of interest that can be inserted into the exploration of any star system and short incidents that may expand into larger adventures, along with three new spacefaring species.

Adventures

Expeditions also contains four full adventures. In Hillforts of Entrata the Travellers make contact with a primitive race and assist a tribal chief to deal with rebellious subjects. Disputed Birthright is an encounter with a race who apparently evolved from the Droyne. Revelations in Kenvab is an opportunity to learn more about the preceding expedition; a collector has somehow obtained relics once used by its leaders. Dreaming in Real Time confronts the Travellers with a derelict starship still partly in jumpspace, and the waking nightmare of the survivors aboard.

Expeditions. Incidents, encounters and adventures on the Deepnight Revelation mission.



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